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SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES

SESSION NO. 7
Monday, August 7, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:12 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Juan Miguel “Migz” F. Zubiri, called the session to order.

PRAYER

Senate President Pro Tempore Legarda led the prayer through a video presentation.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

In line with the celebration of the National Indigenous Peoples Day on August 9, Senate President Zubiri presented the *Koro Bangkal Magbikin*, an all-Aeta youth chorale from Abucay, Bataan, which was supported and managed by the Bataan Tourism Council Foundation, Inc.

Thereupon, the *Koro Bangkal Magbikin* led the singing of the national anthem and the song, entitled “*Isang Dugo, Isang Lahi, Isang Musika.*”

ROLL CALL

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

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



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

Senator Cayetano (A) arrived after the roll call.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

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

- Members of the Philippine Women's National Football Team, also known as "Filipinas," including Katrina Guillou, Inna Palacios, Sarina Bolden, Jessika Cowart, Hali Long, Meryll Serrano, Maya Alcantara, Sofia Harrison, Olivia McDaniel, and Chandler McDaniel, as well as their coaching staff: Mr. Jefferson Cheng, Team Manager; Ms. Isabella Fernando, Team Administrator; and Mr. Cedelf Tupas, Media Officer;
- Mayor Francisco Mendoza and councilors from Mendez, Cavite;
- Members of the *Koro Bangkal Magbikin*; and
- Rep. Tsuyoshi Anthony "Hori" Horibata of the First District of Camarines Sur.

Senate President Zubiri welcomed the guests to the Senate and congratulated the Filipinas team members for scoring the country's first-ever goal in the World Cup history against the host nation, New Zealand.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 3:24 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

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

APPROVAL OF SENATE BILL NO. 2165 ON THIRD READING

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Third Reading, Senate Bill No. 2165, printed copies of which were electronically distributed to the senators on August 3, 2023.

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the *Rules of the Senate*, upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Secretary Bantug read only the title of the bill, to wit:

**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE AUTOMATIC INCOME CLASSIFICATION
OF PROVINCES, CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES.**

Secretary Bantug called the roll for nominal voting.



RESULT OF THE VOTING

The result of the voting was as follows:

In favor

Angara	Legarda
Binay	Marcos
Cayetano (A)	Padilla
Cayetano (P)	Poe
Dela Rosa	Revilla
Ejercito	Tolentino
Escudero	Tulfo
Estrada	Villanueva
Gatchalian	Villar (C)
Go	Villar (M)
Lapid	Zubiri

Against

Hontiveros	Pimentel
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Abstention

None

With 22 senators voting in favor, two against, and no abstention, the Chair declared Senate Bill No. 2165 approved on Third Reading.

EXPLANATIONS OF VOTE

Following are the explanations of vote of the senators on Senate Bill No. 2165:

By Senator Pimentel

I vote *no* to the passage of this bill because it involves the delegation of legislative power and, mark my word, this will not be the last incidence of this kind of request from this Chamber.

This is a power exercised by the legislature since the 1930s. In the opinion of this Representation, there is no need to delegate this power as the bill is complete enough to accomplish its purpose even without the delegation, unless it is the delegation which is the objective of the bill.

The delegation we have decided to do does not comply with a constitutional requirement as delineated by the Supreme Court. The bill is not complete because the Secretary of Finance is given the discretion as to how to adjust the numerical income ranges. There are no parameters for the adjustment. There is also a lack of sufficient standards as there is no limitation to the authority of the Secretary. He can increase by 1% or up to 100% the ranges without any guideline.

To summarize, my objection is based on a policy question on whether we should delegate this power, which is legislative in nature, to the Secretary of the Department of Finance.

The stand of this Representation is that there is no need to delegate this power because even without this delegation of power, the bill will achieve its objective of updating the income classification and even enhancing it.

To supplement this explanation of vote, this Representation will file a written explanation in due time.

By Senator Hontiveros

I vote No to the approval of Senate Bill No. 2165 on the Automatic Income Classification of LGUs Ratification.

My negative vote is mainly anchored on the legislature's grant of administrative authority to the Secretary of Finance to adjust the income ranges that will be used as basis for succeeding income classification of LGUs, and should in no way be construed as my objection to LGUs empowerment and their capability to provide better services to their constituents.

I share my Minority Leader's assertion that this delegation of authority is unnecessary to the original intent of the Bill which is to update the income classification of our Local Government Units.

Aside from surrendering our legislative power to the Secretary of Finance, the bill does not provide a clear congressional oversight on this delegated power every time there are IRR revisions or changes in methodology are approved. Just as an example, questions can be raised as they have been in the past, on the use by the DoF of a national consumer price index when the relevant index might be regionalized price indexes. Whichever way the DoF decides on matters such as these — later changes to the IRR and to the methodology are considered, the pronouncement of the DoF Secretary becomes final, without so much as a report and explanation to the delegating authority.

Likewise, the bill lacks a mandatory appeals mechanism whereby LGUs who are opposed to their income classification, owing to DoF errors in their income estimates for example, may seek redress or reconsideration.

While I am for greater autonomy, fiscal discipline, transparency, and good governance I am constrained to cast my negative vote to this measure.

By Senator Padilla

A'oodhu billaahi min ash-shaytaan ir-rajeem. Bismillah er rahman er Rahim.

Umaayon po tayo na kailangang matukoy nang tama at napapanahon ang kakayahan sa pananalapi (financial capacity) ng ating mga lokal na pamahalaan at regular na masuri ang anumang pagbabago sa naturang kapasidad.

Malaki po ang implikasyon ng income classification ng mga local government units sa kanilang pagganap ng kanilang mandato. Nagsisilbi itong batayan para sa pagsasaayos ng maximum tax ceiling na maaari nilang ipataw; pinansiyal na grant at aid na maaari nilang matanggap; pasahod at benepisyo ng mga lokal na opisyal at empleyado; at maging limitasyon sa kanilang kakayahang umutang. Mahalaga ang layon ng panukalang batas lalo na at ang huling naitalang income reclassification ng mga lalawigan, lungsod, at munisipalidad ay taong 2008 pa, o labing-apat na taon na ang nakararaan. Dahil sa kasalukuyang klasipikasyon na hindi sumasailalim sa totoo at aktuwal na katayuan sa pananalapi ng mga LGU, nalilimitahan ang kanilang kakayahan na makakuha ng access sa mga programa, tulong, at iba pang mga oportunidad na makapaghahatid ng serbisyo publiko para sa kanilang nasasakupan.

Gayong sumusuporta po tayo sa layunin ng panukalang batas, nais ko pong magpahayag ng aking reserbasyon, partikular na sa Seksyon 5 na nagbibigay ng administratibong awtoridad sa Kalihim ng Department of Finance na isaayos ang income ranges na nakasaad sa batas batay sa pagtaas ng annual regular income mula sa nakaraang income reclassification at magsagawa ng regular income reclassification minsan sa tatlong taon gamit ang ilang batayan.

Tulad ng opinyon ng Pinunong Minorya, Sen. Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, tayo po ay may agam-agam sa kaangkupan ng nasabing seksyon sa isinasaad ng Konstitusyon ukol sa non-delegation of legislative powers.

Malinaw po ang isinasaad ng 1987 Konstitusyon ng Republika ng Pilipinas, Seksyon 1, Artikulo VI: "Dapat masalalay sa isang Kongreso ng Pilipinas ang kapangyarihang tagapagbatas, na dapat na binubuo ng isang Senado at isang Kapulungan ng mga Kinatawan, x x x." Ang delegasyon ng kapangyarihan ay nangangahulugan ng pagsuko ng awtoridad sa mga kinatawan, o sa kaso ng legislative powers sa Kongreso. Samakatuwid, ang paggawa at pag-amyenda ng batas ay maaari lamang gawin ng Kongreso.



Ang pangkalahatang prinsipyo ng delegation of legislative powers ay nakadikit sa doktrina ng separation of powers.

Kung atin pong hihimayin, ang LGU income classification ay nakapasan sa mandato ng Kongreso. Sinimulan po ito sa Section 9 ng Executive Order No. 249, series of 1987, na ipinasa noong Hulyo 25, 1987 na nagbibigay sa Kalihim ng Pananalapi ng administrative authority upang suriin at irekomenda ang mga naaangkop na pagbabago sa income ranges ng klasipikasyon ng kita ng mga LGUs, isang beses bawat apat na taon.

Binibigyang-diin po dito na ang awtoridad ng Kalihim ng Department of Finance ay umaabot lamang sa pagrekomenda ng mga angkop na pagbabago ng naturang iskedul ng kita, o income ranges, sa tamang awtoridad—ang Kongreso ng Pilipinas.

Sa ilalim ng Section 8 ng Local Government Code of 1991 na ipinasa noong Oktubre 10, 1991, itinatakda na ang klasipikasyon ng kita ng mga LGUs ay dapat i-update sa loob ng anim na buwan mula sa bisa ng batas. Wala ring binanggit na iniaatas ang kapangyarihan sa Kalihim ng Department of Finance.

Sa katunayan, pinagtibay ito ng Department of Justice sa kanilang mga inilabas na opinion-posisyon mayroon lamang “recommendatory authority” ang DOF sa pagbabago sa mga klasipikasyon ng kita ng mga LGUs.

Batid po natin na sa huli ay nasa Korte Suprema pa rin ang pagtukoy ng constitutionality ng nasabing Seksyon 5.

Gayon pa man, bago po magtapos ang pagdinig sa panukalang ito, nais ko pong bigyang-diin na hindi mababago ang layon ng panukalang batas kung mananatili at gagampanan ng Kongreso ang ating tungkulin.

By Senator Cayetano (A)

It is a Monday. Some people look forward to Mondays; some people have a hard time getting out of bed *kapag* Monday. In a sense *po*, if we are sitting here at the back, we could feel the pride of all Filipinos all around the world because seated behind us is the Philippine women’s national football team, which gave us the first goal and the first win in the World Cup. And all around the world they are talking about the record-breaking attendance of the FIFA Women’s World Cup. So, in that sense, it is such a good Monday.

But in a sense that we went to bed last night seeing the video of the Chinese Coastguard using water cannons against our Philippine Coast Guard in the re-stocking, or *iyong pagbibigay ng mga kailangan ng ating mga sundalong nagbabantay sa Ayungin Shoal*, then also seeing the news on increase of prices, and *nakita po natin* that India said they will not export rice, Russia and Ukraine have another misunderstanding and they will not allow the grains to leave through the Black Sea, Southeast Asia *binabaha* left and right, Europe *may* heat wave; so to make the long story short, Filipinos have to brace for another increase in the price of rice; oil prices went up, so *pamasaha* might go up.

So, what am I talking about in relation to this bill?

In a perfect world, I agree with the Minority Leader, every three years we should drop everything and look at the classification of income. But the reality is, this is an ordinary Monday for us. It is extraordinary in the sense that the high prices are really getting higher and the dispute with China is again reaching new heights. It is extraordinary in the sense that the Philippine national team—you know, this is once in a lifetime, this is a small seed that will grow into a big tree. But in a sense that *ganito naman po talaga tayo ka-busy parati*, and I am literally a person married to the LGU because my wife has been a mayor for 10 years already, and *napaka-importante po iyong* classification ng income. And just to highlight one line that Sen. JV Ejercito, the sponsor, whom I congratulate today—of course, with Senator Tolentino—*iyon pong* classification of salaries, it is so difficult for LGUs to compete with the private sector to get good people.

People who go to BGC, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig will say na “*Ang ganda! Para tayong nasa Singapore. Parang mini-New York. Ang gaganda ng buildings.*” Of course, all around the country—whether we go to Cebu, to Davao, we go to Ayala Avenue in Makati, we go to Mandaluyong—and see all of those buildings, we take it for granted that *napakaliit ng suweldo*

ng ating city engineer diyay. And, you know, engineers who build buildings, architects, will probably take three to six months to make a plan, and they are probably paid 1% to 10% of the total cost, maybe an average of 2% to 3%. So, if it is a P1-billion building, we expect the architect to be paid P20 million to 30 million, and it takes six months. *Pero sa LGU po, tatambakan ng building permits for 10 buildings; susuwelduhan ng magkano? P80,000? P100,000? Baka hindi pa mag-neto ng P150,000 a month. And kung ma-delay ng more than one month iyong building permit, we are mad already at the city engineers, but it took the engineers and the architects six months to make the plans.*

So, what I am saying is, this might seem like a small bill but in the 1,001 things that we have to do to make life easier for the LGUs so that they can be the secret weapon of our national government; this is a small step but will give great benefits. And I hope the 24 of us can continue to find ways to automatize or to—I do not want to use the word “delegate” because I do understand the Minority Leader *na responsibility natin ito*—but we do have to find a way to find our LGUs become more effective because, in reality, people judge the national government of the Philippines not by what they see in the whole Philippines but how their local governments actually act.

So, in that sense, I vote “yes.” And as an omnibus way of speaking today, I congratulate the women’s national football team, and I join the Senate President in the outrage and the feeling of —“*Ano ba? Mag-usap na. Ayusin na natin ito with our neighbor China.*”

By Senator Ejercito

As the chairperson of the Senate Committee on Local Government, I am deeply grateful to this esteemed Chamber for its unwavering support in approving on Third Reading Senate Bill No. 2165 under Committee Report No. 64, or the Automatic Income Classification of Local Government Units Act.

This bill stands among the priorities of Pres. Bongbong Marcos. In his second State of the Nation Address, he earnestly appealed to Congress to champion this crucial measure, with the aim of bolstering and enriching our local government units’ growth and financial stability.

I would like to thank our coauthors—Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr., Sen. Win Gatchalian, and our Majority Leader, Sen. Joel Villanueva—for their commitment to the passage of this measure. Likewise, I would like to thank our colleagues and the Senate President for supporting this measure until its eventual approval today.

Allow me to extend my gratitude to the Department of Finance, especially to its Bureau of Local Government Finance, for all the technical assistance they provided to this Representation.

I would also like to acknowledge and recognize our esteemed Minority Leader for dedicating his valuable time to thoroughly examine this measure. His insightful questions and inputs have been instrumental in shaping the amendments and safeguards that reinforce Congress’s responsible exercise of power, preventing any undue delegation.

Through constructive collaboration and thorough deliberation, we have ensured that this legislation upholds the principles of transparency, accountability, and balanced governance, all for the welfare and safeguarding of the interest of our LGUs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

At this juncture, Senator Villanueva acknowledged the presence in the gallery of Mayor Azcuena Huervas of Valencia City, Bukidnon, together with the city’s Barangay Indigenous Person Mandatory Representatives.

Senate President Zubiri welcomed the guests to the Senate.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 715

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 715, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE PILIPINAS WOMEN'S FOOTBALL TEAM FOR THEIR HISTORIC VICTORY AGAINST THE NEW ZEALAND TEAM IN THE 2023 FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP HELD IN WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND.

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 Cayetano (C) for her sponsorship.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

In sponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 715, Senator Cayetano (P) delivered the following statements:

Earlier, our Majority Leader acknowledged the presence of some of the members of the team and the administrative staff, but allow me to walk everyone through the experience of a lifetime for me. And this will also serve as the official report of my trip to New Zealand.

The 2023 FIFA World Cup was hosted by Australia and New Zealand. The Philippine team played in New Zealand. So, this Representation had the privilege of being the head of the delegation of the Philippine Team. In fact, everybody will recall that, sometime in February, I also delivered a similar speech wherein I informed the Body that I was also the head of the delegation during their tune-up tournament in Spain—that was the tune-up tournament for this big event.

So, since the team was in New Zealand, they played in three different locations. These were in Dunedin, Wellington, and Auckland. Wellington is actually the seat of government in New Zealand, and thus, I deemed it necessary to visit the New Zealand Parliament and I was accompanied by our Ambassador Kira Christianne Dangana-Azucena.

This Representation just wants to share with this Chamber because Sen. Nancy Binay has been working hard on our new Senate building and the New Zealand parliament was very inspirational. So, this is a very short clip where the New Zealand parliament welcomed me, and I wanted all the girls to see it while they were practicing.

At this juncture, a video presentation was played.

What I wanted to share here is that they had a question hour. I was very interested on how it works because, within one hour, I learned so much about the issues of New Zealand. I was having this conversation, I think with the Senate President and the Majority Leader, that it is not a matter of being with the ruling party, or being with the opposition. It can be set up that way, but, really, I feel like we would save so much hearing time if we utilize the question hour that is also in our Constitution, because we are limited in time, within one hour *lamang talaga. Hindi ito* "Senate minute." It is really one hour where there are 15 questions submitted and they asked those questions *at may follow up pa*. Within an hour *talaga, ang dami ko talagang natutunan*. Anyway, we move on.

So, the way it works, for those unfamiliar with the parliamentary system, the Prime Minister is actually there and all the other ministers are members of parliament, that is why the question and answer is very efficient. Obviously, they are in session as we saw in the video. I was up so I did not get the chance to meet them, but later on that day, part of my official duties was to seat near the New Zealand Prime Minister. This Chamber can imagine how difficult that is. *Kasi ako iyong last man sitting sa Philippines tapos puro New Zealand na iyong katabi ko sa kabila*. So, *ang hirap naman magwala*, and then *nanalo pa tayo*. But, that is the part two of my story.

So, *iyon nga po*, I got the chance to meet Prime Minister Chris Hipkins, and the other people I met were the Minister of Finance and Sports, Mr. Grant Robertson; the Wellington Mayor, a female, Ms. Tory Whanau; Minister of Economic Development, Internal Affairs and Pacific People, Ms. Barbara Edmonds.

Interestingly, there is only five million people in New Zealand, and even the members of parliament, there are not many of them. So, many of them hold multiple positions. So, *kung hindi ba kayo nagtataka, iyong nabanggit kong* Minister of Finance and Sports. But it is a good thing for sports. Senator Angara, could the good gentleman imagine if he is the minister of finance and then sports? He will accept. All right. We have a candidate.

Anyway, a lengthy discussion with the Minister of Finance and Sports because our topic was how they promoted women in sports in New Zealand. And we would think for countries like them that have really immersed themselves in sports, they would not even have a program like that but they actually still have a program on how to improve the participation of women in sports. I will go into that another time. But what struck me aside from the usual financing, which I commend this Senate because we have done so much in financing sports just in the last few years, I am happy that I am surrounded by sporty colleagues, many of whom are still capable of being on the court. And I am looking at the Majority Leader, Senator Angara, and Senator Go, *mga* champion team members *natin sa* basketball. By the way, ladies, the Philippine Senate won the UNTV Cup, they won the same day you won the goal, so they were very inspired by you.

But the interesting conversation I had with the Minister of Sports was the importance of television and network coverage. Because if we do not give women's sports enough coverage, we do not give the rest of the people the opportunity to see how these women are performing. So, I found that very important, and I feel like that is something that we should talk about more and also see what we can do because I am also a soccer mom, and it is very hard to get coverage for women's sports. And I remember when the team that my daughters were playing for, the University of the Philippines, was playing in the finals. The game was at two o'clock p.m.—two o'clock p.m. during the summertime. And I said, "*Bakit naman ganoon ang oras?* These kids might faint." And the reason was, that was the only time that the network gave. So, that to me is a disservice to our athletes—when we make them adjust. I know there are economic things to consider, but I am just saying that these are things that we can improve on.

So, I move on.

To be clear, this was not an easy journey. I had people ask me—and that is why I will repeat it—"you do not just apply for the World Cup and show up." You do not just pay—for example, I am a marathoner. I am a triathlete. Truly, I can pay a fee and join a triathlon or a marathon—except for the Boston Marathon, which we have to qualify; unless, we pay a higher fee to do a sponsored run, and then we donate. But, the World Cup, we have to deserve a slot. And we do that by playing again and again, and qualifying in various tournaments. So, not only is this a tremendous requirement in terms of the time and, of course, the quality of sports performance required of our athletes, but also in terms of funding from whoever is funding; and the funder of this team is sitting over there—Mr. Jefferson Cheng—very quietly sitting over there.

So, the Filipinas qualified for the FIFA World Cup last January 30, 2022, a year and a half ago, after they advance to the semi-finals of the Asian Football Confederation, otherwise known as the AFC Women's Asian Cup, making it the first time for any Philippine football team—either men's or women's—to secure a spot in the FIFA World Cup.

The Majority Leader has acknowledged the people with us. So, I will not go through with that anymore.

In photos now, the very first game played was the Philippines versus Switzerland. And, I belatedly—I am going to stress out my staff because I was just going to say, but I think it would be nice to show. May I see a raise of hands from our colleagues. How many of you know that the first goal was actually made by the Philippines in this Philippines versus Switzerland match? But it was considered "offside," right?

Who made the goal?

That lady over there made the goal.

Stand up *naman*.

So, she made the goal, but I also have a video, I was screaming, but then it was ruled as "offside." So, limited *tayo* by those. Those are technicalities, of course, that *wala talaga tayong magagawa*.

So, they lost that game, but it was a very good first showing, and the next game was a few days later.

So, let us now go to the second game. And this is the game, which we say now made history. So, this is where I pull out the adage that a picture paints a thousand words—less words and more pictures. *Hindi na po ako magsasalita*. I will just show you the video, and this is my video—my claim to a copyright. *Ika-copyright ko po iyong video na iyan* because it is my personal video. *Sanay ako* as a soccer mom.

At this juncture, a video presentation was shown on the screen.

Ako lamang iyong sumisigaw. But my mistake is I failed to ask the Majority Leader to share with me the video because *may sigawan din na ganoon*. All right, he will show it. The senators—we have to block out the expletives because they were so happy. There were expletives coming out of their mouths. That goes to show the difference in our styles because I do not use those expletives. But they were just so happy for you, jumping up and down in our lounge. So, that is my video.

Now, there is a professional video that has a better view.

At this juncture, a video presentation was shown on the screen.

All right. Wait, backtrack, I did not know how to pronounce her name. I had to ask her. The lady whom I asked to stand up is Katrina Guillou.

So now, let me say a few words about that video. The Filipinas stunned the world after they upset World No. 26 and 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup co-host hometown team, New Zealand, with the full-time score of 1-0 at Wellington Regional Stadium on July 25, 2023. And, this goal was set up—unfortunately, she is not here—but through across by Sara Eggesvik; and then a header by Sarina Bolden. Stand up, Sarina.

They might think that the Senate is lacking in luster and in clapping, but we are not allowed to clap. So, that is why we are like prim and proper.

SUSPENSION OF THE RULES

Upon motion of Senator Cayetano (P), there being no objection, the Body approved the suspension of the *Rules of the Senate* to allow the Members and the guests in the gallery to show their appreciation to the Philippine Women's National Football Team by giving them a round of applause.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR CAYETANO (P)

(Continuation)

All right. So, a little bit of history. Last September 2022, it was also Sarina Bolden who scored the goal for the Philippines Women's Team in an international friendly match in New Zealand. I did not know that. So, she has a "thing" with them. And then for those of us who watched intently, or even if they do not watch, it is common sense that the only way one will win is to make more goals and to prevent the other team from making goals, right? So, clearly, what was important since we already had a score—a one—we have to make sure that no more goals were made. And the woman responsible for the "no more goals" is no other than Olivia McDaniel. Where is she? There she is. Please stand up. I am used to looking for her in a different shirt color, but now she is wearing the same color. So, that is Olivia McDaniel, and she was the Visa Player of the match. Amazing work, unbelievable.

I had like five videos of her, ensuring that the ball does not touch the net. Anyway, are we showing that? All right.

At this juncture, a video presentation was shown on the screen.



The historic first goal sparked a thrilling atmosphere of pure joy and pride among Filipinos around the world. But, especially in the stadium where our *kababayans* made their presence felt, outnumbered as we were, there was no way of not being heard. And, I asked the girls if they heard the cheers of the Filipinos, and their answer was “yes,” right? And even though, those from far away, the team knew that they were cheering—in the watch parties, in our Senate Lounge—cheering for them. So, that was a special day for us in Wellington.

And then, the third game was in Oakland. *Pauwi na sana ako*. Absent *po ako* last Monday because I was already in Sydney on my way home and I decided to go back because I felt I should be there for the third game, regardless of what happened. So, I was happy to be back. Their opponent, Norway, was very determined to win because they had been beaten by the hometown, New Zealand. Norway did play very well, so, we lost that game. But we still ended on a very, very happy note. I think the Filipinas knew that, overall, this was a great experience for them. Like I said, they made history; they brought us so much joy, so much pride, and we are happy that many of them were able to come home to the Philippines to meet our *kababayans*, and for our *kababayans* to express their support as well.

At this point, I just want to thank everybody who has been a part of this journey. I will go by the pictures. The supporters. Some of them are total strangers who just wanted to support the Filipinos. Some of them do not know anything about football but they live in New Zealand, they live in Australia, and they came to support the Filipinas. So, aside from the supporters, of course, the families. The families, like the players, have made so many sacrifices to allow the girls to be here. I also want to thank the families for making this happen, for providing the support.

And then, of course, the PFF leadership, Nonong Araneta, the President; the Secretary General, Edwin Gastanes; the rest of the crew that make up the support behind the team; Coach Belay, of course; and the doctors—my sister-in-law is actually one of the team doctors, Dr. Fille Cainglet. And then we want to thank also POC for the support, the President for the support. But I want to thank our dear colleagues for the support not only by cheering but, really, through funding.

Alan [(Senator Cayetano (A))] is reminding me about the manager, *pero binati ko na*. But he deserves another mention, Mr. Jefferson Cheng, who really, really makes this happen. *Salamat talaga*. I mean, they could have pulled out anytime, *pero* all the way, until the end *ang* support *talaga ni Jeff*.

And you know, in the U.S., very little, if not zero, support *ang* government. They take care of infrastructure. But it is really generous patrons who provide the support, and Jeffrey Cheng is one of them. Again, thank you so much, Jeff. Super.

So, I hope I did not forget anything because I will end, as I was saying, I need to recognize that in the Senate, with our leadership, the Senate President, who is the chairperson of his own NSA, arnis; and so many of our colleagues, of course: Senator Angara, who is the one, at the end of the day, who makes the final stamp on the support we give; Senator Villanueva, who is always supportive. All of you: Senator Ejercito, like me, is a cyclist, you know, so all the athletes, we support; Senator Go, I mentioned earlier; Senator Francis is also the head of an NSA; and Senator Legarda, *sobrang mag-cheer*—she kept on sending me messages *na* “Please tell them, I am so proud of them.” And she proudly says that she is not an athlete, *pero* supportive and always willing to learn, ladies. So, Senator Legarda *baka* you can have a lesson with the girls.

But let us not forget that we have a senator who started this all, the late Senator Angara. So, he was actually honorary chairman in 2016 to 2019, and I even remember, probably around that time, when he was so excited telling me: “Pia, *papuntahin ko rito ang* Real Madrid, *papuntahin mo iyong* U.P. team.” Because, of course, he was the President of U.P. when I was an athlete. “*Papuntahin mo iyong* U.P. team.” So, aside from the U.P. team, you know, all these grassroots teams, and then Team Baler, which *pinapunta rin niya ang* Real Madrid all the way to Baler.

We want to acknowledge that, because these things do not happen overnight. I thank the Senate for their patience. But, if you notice, I always go back to history because the things that we have been able to do, they rarely, rarely happen in this particular Senate. It is usually three years ago, six years ago, 12 years ago, 15 years ago and I do not want us to forget that history, because we cannot move forward. We always take off from what our predecessors have left behind.

That is my penultimate message. And my very last one is a surprise for my colleagues, but a little extra job for the football team, because I have t-shirts for everyone. But I think, ladies, the senators would want you to sign, so bring out your pens before you leave—don't miss your flight; but I think they want a little memorabilia from you. So, this is from me and Alan [Senator Cayetano (A)] to commemorate this very special year for sports—for women in sports—and for football.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

At this juncture, Senate President Zubiri expressed his appreciation to Senator Cayetano (P) for her unwavering support of the Philippine Women's National Football Team as well as for the jerseys. In the interest of time, he announced that his cosponsorship speech on the measure would be inserted directly into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

Pursuant to the manifestation of Senate President Zubiri, following is his cosponsorship speech on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 715, which was deemed read and inserted into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*:

I am very proud to cosponsor this resolution commending our very own Philippine Women's National Football Team—the Filipinas—for their trailblazing run at the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.

It has been such an exciting time for the country as we followed the journey of our hometown heroes to the biggest stage of their career.

Nothing brings the country together like a good match. For a moment, a huge game can hold the country's rapt attention, no matter our faith, our politics, our language. We all come together, united in support of our athletes.

We have seen this happen with our *Pambansang Kamao*, Sen. Manny Pacquiao; with our historic 2020 Olympians; with countless PBA, UAAP, and PBL games—and we saw it once again with the Filipinas, on a truly global scale.

The team's historic debut at the World Cup really united our *kababayans* from the world over together.

From people who flocked to the games in New Zealand, to fans who held their own watch parties from home, *nagkaisa talaga ang mga kababayan natin para subaybayan at suportahan ang laban ng ating Filipinas*.

Hindi namin makakalimutan ang saya ng ating unang panalo sa World Cup. The big triumph against no less than the host country, New Zealand, will go down as a defining moment in Philippine sports history.

So to all of our Filipinas players—*maraming salamat, at saludo kami sa inyo*.

We see your heart and your hard work; and we are hopeful that you can always draw strength and spirit from our unwavering support.

Mabuhay ang Filipinas!

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECHES

In cosponsoring Proposed Senate Resolution No. 715, the following members likewise delivered their individual speeches:

By Senator Villanueva

In this august Chamber, *isa pong karangalan na ma-cosponsor ang Proposed Senate Resolution No. 720 na nagbibigay karangalan at pagpupugay sa Filipinas, ang ating Women's*

National Football Team, *sa pagtala ng kasaysayan sa Women's World Cup*. You converted millions of Filipino sports fans to football lovers. We also like to put on record our sincerest thanks and congratulations to our distinguished colleague, the lady Senator from Taguig and Pateros, our very own Sen. Pia S. Cayetano, an athlete herself, for heading our delegation in New Zealand.

When our national team made football history by just securing a spot in the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup, we were already beyond grateful and absolutely delighted for their incredible achievement. In our debut in football's biggest stage, we competed against World No. 20, Switzerland; World No. 26, New Zealand; and World No. 12, Norway. Playing against higher ranking teams did not deter the Filipinas—currently the World's No. 46—from showing their talent, from showing their heart, their passion, and dedication to clinch the first-ever World Cup win in our first ever appearance. *Kaya naman po noong July 25, sa laban ng Pilipinas kontra New Zealand, lahat po tayo dito sa Senado, sa pangunguna ng ating Senate President Zubiri, ay nagtatalon sa tuwa at excitement habang naka-score ng goal si Sarina Bolden na kasama po natin ngayon.*

At this juncture, a video presentation was shown on the screen.

Iyan po ang video na mismong kuha ng ating colleague, Sen. Pia S. Cayetano, at hindi na lamang po natin ilalakas masyado iyong sound dahil talagang puro boses po niya ang maririnig natin.

Sa katunayan po, sa record o sa talaan ng Senado, hindi po tayo nakapagsimula agad. Hindi po tayo kaagad nagsimula ng ating sesyon dahil lahat ay nakatutok sa laban ng Filipinas. Baka ho pupuwedeng ayain ko iyong ating mga guest to watch this video. Tinanggal na po namin iyong mga explicit words. Ipapadala na lamang namin iyong video na kuha naman po ni Sen. Grace Poe.

Our first ever World Cup goal turned out to be the only goal in the said game, which stunned the home crowd of New Zealand. We may have bowed out of the competition, but our national team have won the hearts of football fans all over the world.

Their names are already etched in history, and we will be forever grateful to them and the entire coaching staff and people behind the team for bringing this unforgettable glory to the country. It is our hope that with this historic feat, football is now given the attention it rightfully deserves. We look forward to the continuous development of our national program so that in the next editions of the World Cup, we will not only compete, but we will also lift the World Cup trophy.

Muli, binabati po natin ang Filipinas Women's National Football Team. At muli, babanggitin ko ang mga pangalan na kasama po natin na naririto: Katrina Guillou; Inna Palacios; Sarina Bolden; Jessica Cowart; Hali Long, our co-captain; Meryll Serrano; Maya Alcantara; Sofia Harrison; Olivia McDaniel; Chandler McDaniel; and ang favorite player ko, si Sara Eggesvik, ay wala po; siya po ang nagpasa—mas mahirap po iyon— at ang nag-facilitate ng play.

Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat. Binabati po namin kayo. Mabuhay po kayo! Mabuhay ang atletang Pilipino!

By Senator Angara

I would to add to what Sen. Pia S. Cayetano and our Majority Leader have so eloquently put in commending our Filipinas footballers.

Of course, their breathtaking run placed the country once again in the spotlight of world football. We were the darling of world football, making headlines in the *New York Times*, the *World Street Journal*, *The Times of London*, and other world-renowned publications.

Football has long been a part of Filipino culture and heritage. We can recall how our country was among the powerhouses in Asia, if not the world, early in the 20th century when we were winning against football giants, with score lines of 15-2, among others.

We also have a football icon in the person of Paulino Alcantara, a Filipino-Spanish mestizo born in Iloilo, who once held football club Barcelona's scoring record with 395 goals in 399 games.

It had to take one century and, perhaps for many, the greatest of all time, a Lionel Messi, who is considered one of the greatest players ever to play the sport, to break Alcantara's record.

Nanalo rin ng labinlimang kampeonato o championship ang Barcelona sa Spanish league sa mga taon na naglaro si Paulino Alcantara bilang kanilang striker.

Our milestones in the sports are made meaningful as individuals and groups devote their time, effort, and finances to further develop the sport in the country.

We commend the Philippine Football Federation; we commend the Team Manager, Jeff Cheng. They have been crucial in elevating Filipino football over the years through significant initiatives.

We thank Sen. Pia S. Cayetano for mentioning my father, who was the honorary chair of the PFF, and he brought the coaches of Real Madrid here many years ago and they coached some children in BGC, also sponsored by the Emperador under the Tan group.

So, for once, the PFF established centers for football excellence in 2005 and in 2023, which aimed to develop young Filipinos into the best football players and to create a team that can compete and win in international football tournaments. The PFF also brought in players who played in very competitive football leagues, like the British Premier League, the German League, among others. And over time, local football leagues were also formed, particularly the United Football League in 2009 and the PFF Women's League in 2016, which allowed wider participation for individuals and teams nationwide and allow the PFF to discover new talents in building our national team.

We also thank our colleagues because we had budget initiatives back in 2021. For 2024, I am sure, with the spotlight shown by our Filipinas on the sport, we will do more under your leadership, under the Majority Leader, the sports champion, Sen. Pia S. Cayetano, Sen. Alan Peter S. Cayetano, Sen. Christopher Lawrence T. Go, Sen. Francis "Tol" N. Tolentino, among the many sports champions in our Chamber.

So, once again, from a grateful nation, we thank the Filipinos for showing us that the Filipino is truly world class.

God bless and *mabuhay po*.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

Senate President Zubiri stated that Senator Poe was once a taekwondo player and silver medalist in the Palarong Pambansa, whereas the Philippine Arnis Team claimed the most medals at the Cambodia Southeast Asian Games.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECHES

(Continuation)

By Senator Go

As Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Sports, it is my honor and privilege to cosponsor this resolution conveying our profoundest commendation to our Filipinas football team for their outstanding performance, sportsmanship, determination, and skill and for securing a historic and first-ever victory against the formidable New Zealand Football Team in the FIFA Women's World Cup.

While we may not be able to advance to the next phase, I am beyond grateful to have witnessed that our Filipino athletes have become more competitive in various international sporting competitions.

Talagang nakatataba ng puso na unti-unti na pong nagbubunga ang mga pinagpaguran at pagsasakripisyo ng ating mga Pilipinong atleta sa iba't-ibang larangan ng sports.

The triumphant achievement resonates deeply with the Filipino people as it not only showcases the team's prowess on the global stage but also symbolizes the resilience and indomitable spirit of the Philippines.

To our athletes, the glory and honor you have given to this country will be forever etched

in Philippine sports history. Each and every one of you have become a symbol of inspiration and motivation to future generations of athletes.

This is a momentous milestone in the history of Philippine sports and signifies the continuous progress and growing prominence of women's football in our country.

I also want to particularly give recognition to Sarina Bolden for scoring the historic match-winner in that 24th minute of the game.

Gusto ko rin pong pasalamatan at i-congratulate ang coaching staff led by Coach Alen Stajcic, whose dedication, expertise, and guidance led the team to this historic win.

I also commend Team Manager Jeff Cheng's unwavering support and commitment. *Importante po iyong suporta sa team.*

Of course, we also recognize Sen. Pia Cayetano who was there in New Zealand to personally give support to the team.

Salamat din po kay Senate President Juan Miguel "Migz" F. Zubiri at Finance Chair Sen. Sonny Angara sa suporta sa budget ng ating Committee on Sports.

Again, I would like to extend my sincerest congratulations to the Filipinas National Football Team. We look forward to seeing you to continue to excel as you make your mark in the international sporting scene.

By Senator Tulfo

Una sa lahat, nais kong pasalamatan si Sen. Pia S. Cayetano sa pagpunta roon sa game para magbigay ng kaniyang suporta and, of course, sa ating Senate President, Juan Miguel "Migz:" F. Zubiri.

Nakita ko iyong araw na nagkasiyahan doon sa Executive Lounge. Dinig na dinig ko iyong mga malulutong na mga sinasabi na hindi puwedeng banggitin dito. Pero nakatutuwa kasi gigil na gigil ang ating mga senador sa pagbigay ng kanilang suporta sa ating team. At noong magkaroon ng first goal, sobrang tuwa, naglundagan, nakabibinging sigaw, maipakita lamang iyong pagmamahal at pagsuporta sa ating team.

I would like to join as a cosponsor of this resolution. Looking at the Philippine women's football team today, our hearts swell with pride at the feat that they have achieved.

Maraming nagsasabi na you have made history with your first goal and win in the World Cup, and this piece of history has opened the doors for our football athletes. Thank you, my dear athletes, for dreaming. I thank you for showing up every day during your training, and I thank you for bringing your big Filipina hearts during the games. Puso po ang ambag ng ating mga Filipino talents. Filipino athletes, we honor you today and I know that this is just the beginning of your journey. The entire country is behind you.

Saludo po ako sa inyong lahat.

By Senator Estrada

I wish to convey my warmest congratulations and utmost admiration to Team Filipinas for their historic victory at the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. Their feat is nothing short of spectacular. *Sino po ba ang mag-aakalang makakarating ang Pilipinas sa pinaka-prestihiyosong paligsahan ng football sa buong mundo? Surely, we are known all over for our fighting skills. At talagang kinatakatutan ang mga Pilipino sa boxing ring dahil sa tatak ng ating pambansang kamao, the legendary, former Sen. Manny Pacquiao. Kinilala rin tayo sa bowling at sa billiards dahil sa ating mga tinitingalang atleta na sina Paeng Nepomuceno at Efren "Bata" Reyes. But it was a Filipina who put us in the map in terms of sports. The late Lydia de Vega, na tinaguring Asia's Sprint Queen noong 1980s. And it was another Filipina that will bring home our very first Olympic gold, ang weightlifter natin na si Hidilyn Diaz.*

Never did we imagine that the Philippines stands a chance to play alongside the World's best football players until there was the Team Filipinas. The past year has been full of remarkable achievements for the team. They gave the country its first Southeast Asian Games in football since 1985 by winning in Hanoi, Vietnam. The Women's National Football Team also bagged the ASEAN

Football Federation Women's championship trophy last July 20, 2022. Last January of last year, they secured a spot at the FIFA World Cup following a debut at the semi-finals of the Asian Football Confederation Asian Cup.

Allow me to offer my deepest gratitude to the 23 women of Team Filipinas as well as to their coach and support team. And of course, our very own, Sen. Pia S. Cayetano, for what is hailed as one of the brightest moments in the Philippine team's sports history.

Thank you for showing what the Filipinos are made of: capable of defying the odds, exceeding expectations, and conquering seemingly insurmountable obstacles. *Gaya po ng aking mga kasamahan, naniniwala po ako na nagsisimula pa lamang ang Filipinas, at nananabik po akong panoorin pa ang marami pa nilang pagtatagumpay sa hinaharap at pagwawagayway ng ating bandila sa mga susunod nilang laban.*

This Representation will be greatly honored if I will be included as one of the coauthors and cosponsors of this Senate resolution commending our new sports heroines and true Filipino champions.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECHES

Pursuant to the manifestation of Senator Villanueva, following are cosponsorship speeches on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 715, which were deemed read and inserted into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*:

By Senator Legarda

I rise before this honorable Chamber today with immense pride and joy to extend my warmest congratulations and unwavering support to the extraordinary athletes of the Philippine Women's National Football Team.

Today, we come together to celebrate their historic triumph—an achievement that has resonated deeply within the hearts of every Filipino. It is my honor to cosponsor this resolution that acknowledges and commends the team's remarkable victory during the FIFA Women's World Cup.

As we all know, the journey of these remarkable women athletes has been one paved with dedication, hard work, and determination. Through countless hours of training, pushing their limits, and unwavering commitment to excellence, they have shown the world the true spirit of Philippine sportsmanship and camaraderie.

Their performance in the FIFA Women's World Cup is a testament to the strength of Filipino character. Our athletes have shown that even against great odds and facing formidable opponents on the world stage, they can compete with dignity, honor, and grace.

Beyond the field, the success of our women's football team also serves as a symbol of empowerment for women across the nation. It sends a powerful message that gender is never a barrier to achievement, and that every individual, regardless of background or circumstance, can reach the highest echelons of success with passion and dedication.

Today, as we stand united in celebration of their victory, we must also recognize the team's impact on the next generation. These athletes have become role models for young girls and boys alike. They have ignited dreams in the hearts of countless aspiring footballers, instilling in them the belief that they, too, can make their mark on the world stage.

In the spirit of this momentous occasion, let us seize this opportunity to further support women in sports. Let us invest in the development of more facilities, training programs, and opportunities that will nurture and hone the talents of young female athletes. By doing so, we not only cultivate champions but also pave the way for a more inclusive and equal society.

In closing, I join this esteemed Chamber in congratulating the Philippine Women's National Football Team as well as acknowledging the unwavering support and guidance of their families, the coaching staff and the Philippine football community who have stood firmly behind them.



As we continue to rally behind our athletes, let this serve as a reminder of the unyielding spirit of the Filipino people. Let this resolution and the triumph of the Women's National Football Team be a rallying cry for the continued support and advancement of women's sports in our country. Together, let us create a future where every young Filipina athlete can dream, aspire, and excel without limits. Let us continue to march forward, breaking barriers, achieving greatness, and making our nation proud. *Mabuhay ang Philippine Women's National Football Team!*

By Senator Revilla

I share the commendations of our colleagues for Team Filipinas, for their historical and maiden win in the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.

Saludo tayo sa ipinamalas nilang teamwork sa nasabing kompetisyon. Higit sa pagkilala ng kanilang lakas at husay ay ang pagpapasalamat sa kanilang tiyaga at determinasyon na magtagumpay sa larangan ng global football arena.

You exemplify the true Filipino spirit of courage and resilience, and we salute you for the inspiration you have given the Filipinos, especially the youth, who aspire to achieve the same feat that you have. Thank you for paving the way so that many others may follow. You are a living proof that a Filipino can dream, and with passion and determination, make it happen. *Walang imposible para sa isang disiplinado at masipag na atleta.*

Hinihikayat ko ang aking mga kasamahan na bigyang tinig ang ating mga atleta sa Bulwagang ito, at isulong ang mga inisyatibo upang higit nating mapalakas ang ating mga atleta. Our commendations need to be translated to support that will ensure they will excel even more in their competitions, and encourage them to continue representing the country.

May I also manifest my intent to be made coauthor of this resolution.

Tuloy lang ang laban!

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR EJERCITO

Senator Ejercito revealed that he was with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during the latter's visit to Malaysia, which coincided with the Philippines' victory over New Zealand. He stated that the President was proud and elated about the performance of the Philippine team in the competition.

He then requested coauthorship of the resolution.

COAUTHORS

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, all Members were made coauthors of the resolution.

ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 715

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body adopted, subject to style, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 715, taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 720 and 722.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the session was suspended.

It was 4:26 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:36 p.m., the session resumed with Senator Ejercito presiding.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

Availing himself of the privilege hour, Senate President Zubiri delivered the following speech:

I stand here today to stand with our Coast Guard men and women as they face hostile actions by intruders right on our very own seas.

I stand here today in support of our troops of the BRP Sierra Madre, who have endured years of blockade by interlopers who mistakenly think that by denying our boys food they will also bring down their morale.

I stand here today in solidarity with our fishermen, who have been blocked from the rich waters, which are legally and historically ours, by a swarm of gunboats dispatched from the Great Wall of Sand.

I stand here today to articulate the hurt and the hopes of a people whose rights have been trampled by a bully who refuses to stand down.

We have been cautioned not to meddle on matters, which by some theory, is the realm of the Executive.

We are often reminded that “politics stops at the water’s edge,” meaning, discussions on politics should remain within our borders. We respect that foreign affairs is a business solely pursued by the President.

But how can we not speak up when the very troops who secure our borders and stand on harm’s way have been airing their disgust?

How can we remain mute when one nation after another has been voicing out their full-throated condemnation of yet another provocation against our Coast Guard peacefully navigating on our seas?

How can we not echo the anger of a people against heinous acts on the high seas, committed with impunity by a party squatting on territory that is ours, if we want to be true to our mandate?

Kung tikom ang ating bibig at bahag ang ating buntot, paano tayo magiging Senado ng Taumbayan kung ayaw nating bigyang-bose ang kanilang hinagpis?

Last week’s provocative, illegal, and dangerous maneuvers by a Chinese Coast Guard vessel on a Philippine Coast Guard supply boat is the latest manifestation of its “might vs. right” treatment of its peaceful neighbors.

It is a show of its diplomatic duplicity: of professing friendship, but practicing hostile behavior.

Bobolahin tayo nila na kaibigan daw sila natin. Tapos sa isang iglap, bobombahin ng tubig ang ating mga barko.

How can they convince us that they are sincere, when one day they shower a former President of ours with praises and assurances in Beijing, and then shortly after, the next day, they fire water cannons on our ships.

At ang ganyang pagtrato hindi lang ginagawa nila sa mga barko ng Republika ng Pilipinas, pero ang masakit, ginawa din sa mga baroto o bangka ng mangingisdang Pilipino.

This incident reaffirms the merit of the resolution the Senate has unanimously passed last week. That resolution illuminates the way forward. Because China contemptuously ignores protests, all the more that we have to rally the world to condemn acts which have no place in a civilized order.

This is a defining moment for this Senate.

Today, we join the nation in standing its ground, from the front, if need be, and longer from the rear.



And I want to go back to the picture of the Philippines again, from Ayungin Shoal and Pag-asa. *Mas malayo po ang Pag-asa Island kaysa Ayungin Shoal. Napaka-klaro na ang Ayungin Shoal ay nasa loob ng ating Exclusive Economic Zone.*

Bakit nagsasabi ang Tsina na kanila po ang lugar na ito, na napakalayo ng Tsina—600 nautical miles away from Hainan Province. No rhyme nor reason, no logical explanation, that they can say that this is theirs—kasi kakalabas lang sa CNN at sinabi nila na iyan ay indisputable sovereign territory ng Tsina. How can that possibly be? They are the only country that acknowledges that. No other country acknowledges that they own that portion of the South China Sea—the West Philippine Sea.

China is a titan, that is a given. Their military expenditure alone is 70 times that of ours. We are even more dwarfed in terms of ships built. We are outmanned and outgunned.

The peace we seek will not grow from the barrel of our guns.

But what we lack in force, we have in law and in goodwill. *Sa puso ng ating mga kababayan. Hindi ba kung sa basketball pa, sa FIBA, sabi natin, kaya ba natin talunin iyong malalaking mga basketball teams? Ang sabi natin, lalabanan natin sila gamit ang ating puso.*

The international system remains one of law, and in this where we have the advantage. Might does not make right, and neither does it make fiction a reality.

The Hague Tribunal is fully in our favor, and so is the rest of the world.

They cannot turn away, for they have a skin in the game. One third of global shipping passes through the South China Sea, or the West Philippine Sea. The world will not allow that it be turned into a Chinese *koi* pond.

If China is left undeterred, they can—and will—put a choke hold on the global trade.

We welcome the influence of all nations who can help secure our seas.

Despite all this, we have retained friendly relations with China amid this dispute. Even in the midst of contention, we deliberate with them.

Disagreements should not foreclose engagement.

Pero iyon nga ang sinabi ko noong isang araw sa China, “Bakit napakahirap kang kaibiganin? At napakahirap mong mahalina?”

Kung gusto mong makipag-kaibigan sa aming bansa, bakit napakahirap na gawin po ito, dahil sa mga ginagawa ninyong mga atraso sa amin?

We have filed protests and *note verbales*. Again, today, another *note verbale* was sent to Beijing in the hundreds, too many to count, but enough, I think, to giftwrap its embassy here with the paper it was written on. *Ganoon kadaming note verbale iyon.*

Although they have repaid our hospitality with hostility, harassment, and hosing down of our ships, we do not give up on the hope that it is weaned of its bullying ways and with the world's help and influence to finally recognize our sovereignty in our very own waters.

By simply following the rules, particularly of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as expected of a member of nations and signatory to this, China can make the West Philippine Sea a zone of peace, a place of progress, and an example of coexistence.

These recent events should define this Senate. We must join the nation in standing its ground, by being at the forefront of discussions, and no longer on the sidelines or from the rear.

Although none of us here champion hostility, nor endorse the very tactics that we condemn, but all of us here are tired of the status quo. *Paulit-ulit na lang itong nangyayari sa ating Coast Guard at sa ating mga mangingisda.*

On the search for better strategies, I urge the Executive to run the point, using all viable tools at its disposal, such as a possible joint patrol over the West Philippine Sea with our allies, and the ones we have enumerated in our adopted resolution.

Sa ating magiging na Coast Guard at mga sundalo, maraming salamat sa inyong katatagan at katapangan.

Katulad ng ating taos-pusong kinakanta sa ating Pambansang Awit—"Sa manlulupig 'di ka pasisiil."

Saludo kami sa inyong serbisyo at sakripisyo, at hindi namin kayo pababayaang lumaban nang mag-isa. Kasama ninyo kami sa pagtindig laban sa mga pilit na nanghihimasok sa ating bansa.

At kasama ninyo kami sa pagtindig para sa tunay na malayang Pilipinas. Sa lahat po ng nagdedepensa sa West Philippine Sea, saludo po ako sa inyo—a snappy salute! Once again, mabuhay kayo, at mabuhay ang ating mahal na Pilipinas!

MANIFESTATION OF THE CHAIR

In thanking the Senate President, the Chair, Senator Ejercito, stated that the Body crossed party lines to support his privilege speech.

MANIFESTATIONS OF SENATORS

The following senators delivered their own statements in support of the privilege speech of Senate President Zubiri:

By Senator Tolentino

The August 5 water cannon incident is a blatant escalation of tensions being perpetrated by the Chinese Coast Guard (CCG). Allow me now to provide some details relative to the incident, which happened a few days ago.

Nakikita po natin sa larawang ito, and I hope this can be frozen for a while, nasa harapan po iyong maliit na barko ng Pilipinas na magsu-supply ng provisions para sa Ayungin Shoal. Nasa kaliwa po iyong Chinese militia vessel, nasa likuran naman iyong Chinese Coast Guard vessel.

To make this clearer, ang ating maliliit na barko, kagaya noong nasa harap, ay 20-footer. Ang pangalan ng mga barkong iyan, M/V Unaiza Mae 1 (UM1) at M/V Unaiza Mae 2 (UM2).

Si M/V Unaiza Mae 1 nakalusot, nakapagdala ng pagkain, ng provisions—gamot, medicines, at tubig. Nakapagdala po sila sa loob. Si M/V Unaiza Mae 2, ito pong nakikita natin, iyan po iyong hinarang. Hinarang iyan, hindi lang po noong nakikita nating white Chinese Coast Guard vessel na ang haba ay 138 meters. Iyong atin, 20 meters. Hindi lamang po iyang dalawa ang humarang.

There were five Chinese Coast Guard vessels, and there were 12 Chinese Militia Vessels. These Chinese Militia Vessels moved to constrict the passage of both M/V Unaiza Mae 1 and M/V Unaiza Mae 2—*nakalusot lamang po si M/V Unaiza Mae 1.*

Iyong ipinakita po ni Senate President kanina na basa, ayon po ang M/V Unaiza Mae 2. Si Unaiza Mae 2 po ay halos dalawang oras pinaligiran, hindi lamang ng limang Chinese Coast Guards, mayroon pang involved na 12 Chinese Militia Vessels.

I would like to show a photo—*ito ang ipinakita ni Senate President kanina, iyong CCG5201, kasama pa rin diyang ang CCG5304. Mayroon pa pong limang umaali-aligid na Chinese Navy-People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy warships composed of two (2) type 056A guided-missile corvettes, PLA Navy 629 and 630; a Type 053H3 light frigate; and a Type 052D destroyer. Iyong destroyer na po iyong humahabol doon sa dalawang maliliit na barko natin na 20-footer.*

As I have said, this is very alarming because of the presence of five PLA Navy warships, and the Chinese Militia Maritime blocked the passage of M/V Unaiza Mae 2 vessel. *Bumalik na po sila kasi basang-basa na iyong mga provision — iyong mga bigas, basa na rin iyong mga radio equipment, kaya bumalik na sila after almost two hours of being encircled.*

The harassment was so aggressive that only one supply ship, as I have said, M/V Unaiza Mae, 1 was successful in reaching BRP Sierra Madre, reducing the available food, water, and medicine

of the crew in the following weeks. As I have said, the other supply vessel, UM 2, was doused with water cannons and the unsafe maneuvers of the Chinese Maritime Militia for almost two hours while repeatedly attempting to enter Ayungin Shoal but had to turn back.

The CCG5305 also conducted an unsafe maneuver against the Philippine Coast Guard, causing a near-collision with BRP Malabrigo at a distance of less than five meters. *Dalawa po iyong barko natin doon*—BRP Malabrigo and BRP Cabra. *Ito po ay 44 meters long, as against the 138 meters. Napakaliit lamang po ng dalawang barko ng ating Coast Guard.*

I join the Senate President, that the August 5 water cannon incident cannot be allowed to be set aside and forgotten like all other unprovoked acts of aggression by the Chinese forces in the West Philippine Sea in the past years. It is high time that we, in the Legislature, along with the frontliners in the West Philippine Sea, support actions diplomatically, economically, and, perhaps, the other action in concert with our allies to enhance the capabilities of our forces, acting in accordance with the international law, while also condemning the dangerous and illegal actions of Chinese forces within Philippine waters.

As I speak, as we convene today, *hindi po natin alam kung ano pa iyong nangyayari. Baka mayroon pa pong nangyayari. Kaya ko lamang binanggit ito*, and I support the Senate President, is that, *ngayon po, hindi lamang Chinese Coast Guard but Chinese Navy ang kasali na ngayon*. It is time to see an end to this blatant violation of international law and threats to Philippine sovereignty. Let us, as one country, support our uniformed services and fisherfolk as they lawfully ply and responsibly enjoy the bounties of the West Philippine Sea.

There were five Chinese Coast Guard vessels and there were 12 Chinese militia vessels. And these Chinese militia vessels moved to constrict the passage of both Unaiza Mae 1 and Unaiza Mae 2—*nakalusot lamang po ang Unaiza Mae 1.*

Iyong ipinakita po ni Senate President kanina na nabasa, iyon po ang Unaiza Mae 2 na halos dalawang oras pinaligiran, hindi lamang ng limang Chinese Coast Guards at 12 Chinese militia vessels, kundi mayroon pang na-involve—and I would like to show a photo, *ito ang ipinakita ni Senate President kanina—itong Chinese Coast Guard 5201 at kasama pa rin diyan ang CCG5304.*

At this point, photos of the said sea vessels were shown onscreen.

Mayroon pa pong limang umaali-aligid na Chinese Navy vessels. The Chinese Navy vessels—these are the five People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) warships, composed of the following: two Type 056a guided-missile corvettes, PLAN 629 and 630; a Type 053H3 light frigate, PLAN 527; Type 052D destroyer, PLAN 175; and Type 051B destroyer, PLAN 167. Destroyer na po iyong humahabol doon sa dalawang maliliit na barko natin na 20-footer.

As I have said, this is very alarming because of the presence of five People's Liberation Army Navy warships and the Chinese Militia Maritime, which blocked the passage of Unaiza Mae 2 vessel. *Bumalik na po sila kasi basang-basa na iyong mga provisions. Basa na iyong mga bigas, basa na rin iyong mga radio equipment kaya bumalik na sila* after almost two hours of being encircled.

The harassment was so aggressive that only one supply ship, as I have said, Unaiza May 1, was successful in reaching BRP Sierra Madre, reducing the available food, water, and medicine of the crew in the following weeks. As I have said, the other supply vessel, UM 2, was doused with water cannons and the unsafe maneuvers of the Chinese Maritime Militia for almost two hours while repeatedly attempting to enter Ayungin Shoal, but had to turn back.

The Chinese Coast Guard 5305 also conducted an unsafe maneuver against the Philippine Coast Guard causing a near collision with BRP Malabrigo at a distance of less than five meters. *Dalawa po iyong barko natin doon: BRP Malabrigo and BRP Cabra. Ito po ay 44 meters lamang as against their 138 meters. Napakaliit lamang po ng dalawang barko ng ating Coast Guard.*

Joining the Senate President, that August 5 water cannon incident cannot be allowed to be set aside and forgotten like all other unprovoked acts of aggression by the Chinese forces in the

West Philippine Sea in the past years. It is high time that we in the Legislature, along with the frontliners in the West Philippine Sea, supported actions diplomatically and economically. And perhaps, the other action in consort with our allies is to enhance the capabilities of our forces, acting in accordance with the international law, while also condemning the dangerous and illegal actions of Chinese forces within Philippine waters.

As I speak, as we convene today, *hindi po natin alam kung ano pa iyong nangyayari. Baka mayroon pa pong nangyayari. Kaya ko lamang binanggit ito*, and I support the Senate President, is that *ngayon po, hindi lamang* Chinese Coast Guard but Chinese Navy *ang kasali na ngayon*. It is time to see an end to this blatant violation of the international law and threats to Philippine sovereignty. Let us, as one country, support our uniformed services and fisherfolk as they lawfully ply and responsibly enjoy the bounties of the West Philippine Sea.

Before I end, *kanina po* during the hearing conducted by Senator Estrada, *iyong* Committee on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation, I raised the question: "*Bakit po, sa ngayon*, we have stopped accepting cadets coming from allied countries to enter into the Philippine Military Academy?"

Our cadets are now training in Annapolis in the U.S. Naval Academy, in the U.S. Air Force Academy in West Point, but, at the same time, while we condemn this, *ang dami nating mga opisyaales na nag-aaral pala sa* Beijing Military Academy. *Nandoon po lahat sila*. The chairman of the Senate Committee on Defense is now well apprised of this. And, perhaps, it is about time that we showed our support to our uniformed services by giving them a patriotic guidance and direction.

Again, I support the privilege speech of our Senate President Zubiri, and I reiterate that we should be united as a country and that we should support our uniformed services, *ang atin pong mga kasundaluhan, at ang atin pong mga mangingisda na dapat po ay makinabang sa* West Philippine Sea.

By Senator Estrada

This Representation, as your chairperson of the Senate Committee on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation, conducted a hearing this morning on the proposed National Defense Act and the revitalization of the Self-Reliant Defense Posture (SRDP) Program—both of which are priority measures of the Department of National Defense (DND) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and part of the legislative agenda of our latest Philippine Development Plan (PDP). We have the representatives from the DND, AFP, DFA, among others. And this issue, the recent aggression by the Chinese Coast Guard against our Philippine Coast Guard, was taken up.

The DND and the AFP said that they have already issued a strong statement of condemnation. Upon the questioning of one of our colleagues, Sen. Raffy Tulfo, DND shared that the civilian vessel used in the resupply mission to our troops in Ayungin Shoal was escorted by the Philippine Coast Guard and the Philippine Navy. And this was the case every time there were resupply missions.

We were told that our Defense Attaché in Beijing is also sending a strong statement to his counterpart in China.

On the part of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), together with the National Task Force on the West Philippine Sea (NTF-WPS), the agency assured us that they are fully aware of the circumstances and that they share the concern of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine Coast Guard who were directly affected by the incident. The representative of the DFA said that they are currently undertaking all diplomatic measures and coordinating with their counterparts, here and in Beijing. Finally, they assured us that they assert and re-emphasize in every opportunity our sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction over the concerned areas.

Sabi ko nga po sa aming naging pagdinig kanina, pinapaalis po tayo ng ating kapitbahay sa sarili nating bakuran. Hindi pa po sila nakuntento doon, binugahan pa po tayo ng tubig. Mga bastos!

The Philippines has a continuing foreign policy of being a “friend to all and enemy to none.” I am wondering how far we can maintain this policy of friendship and amity, when we are constantly harassed, bullied, and disrespected as a nation, and our people, our uniformed officers, are being put on a very dangerous situation.

Ano po kaya ang pwede pa nating gawin bilang isang bansa upang tumigil po ang ginagawang ito ng ating kapitbahay at matagal nating kaibigan? Ang Pilipinas at Tsina ay matagal na nagkaroon at napanatili ang maayos na ugnayan. Our trade relations date back to precolonial times. *Ngunit bakit po ganito ang pagtrato nila sa ating ngayon?*

Our historic legal victory in The Hague invalidated the expansive claims of the nine-dash line. The decision is now part of the international law. *Ngunit binabale-wala lang po ito ng Tsina. Ano po ang magandang kahihinatnan ng pagfa-file natin ng diplomatic protests kung ang mismong arbitral ruling ay kanila lamang isinasantabi?*

I join the frustration of the Filipino people in the relentless belligerence of the Chinese government when international law already gives us all the legal rights to the contested areas. I join in the frustration of the whole country that all of our diplomatic attempts seem to bear no fruit. I join the frustration of our people that we seem to be powerless, despite our exhaustive efforts, in defending what is rightfully ours.

By Senator Revilla

We join our Senate President in condemning the latest affront of the Chinese Coast Guard against our very own Philippine Coast Guard.

Ang mga kuha sa ginawa nila laban sa mismo nating Tanod-Baybayin ay isa na namang halimbawa ng mga banta laban sa ating seguridad, kaligtasan, at soberanya.

Nakababahala po na matapos lamang ang nagkaka-isang adbokasiya at pagtindig ng Senado bilang isa sa mga haligi ng kalayaan at kasarinlan ng ating bansa nitong nakaraang linggo, heto at para bang panumuya ang naganap na pagkanyon ng tubig sa ating mga kababayan.

Tila nga po itinakda ng tadhana ang nagawang pag-awit ng mga kabataang katutubo ng ating pambansang awit sa hapong ito. Hindi ko mapigilan na mangilabot dahil isa itong paalala kung para kanino ba natin ginagawa ang maka-ilang ulit na pagtindig laban sa mga banta sa ating soberanya. Ang ating mga kabataan po ang magmamana ng kung ano mang iiwanan natin. Let us make sure we leave them with a Philippines free from aggression and oppression. *Iwan natin sa kanila ang isang Pilipinas na hindi pagagapi kailanman at kanino man.*

Ang mga anak ng Perlas ng Silanganan ang nanindigan upang taas-noo nating maiwagayway ang ating bandila, at sila ang ating huwaran upang ang alab sa ating mga puso ay hindi magmaliw kailanman. Our forefathers who sacrificed for us to enjoy the blessings of freedom, democracy, and sovereignty have taught us never to bow or bend even when the threat of intimidation is high.

Ang Pilipinas na duyan ng magiting ay palaging handang salagin ang ano mang talim ng kalasag. Hindi noon, at lalong hindi ngayon, na tayo ay yuyuko at pasisiil sa mga manlulupig.

By Senator Hontiveros

Senator Hontiveros joined Senate President Zubiri in the latter’s privilege speech supporting the Philippine Coast Guard against the Chinese Coast Guard’s water cannon attack in the West Philippine Sea. She stated that the August 5, 2023 incident proved that the Body was justified in adopting Senate Resolution No. 718 in condemning the continued harassment of Filipino fishermen and the persistent incursions in the West Philippine Sea by the Chinese Coast Guard and militia vessels, in urging the Philippine government to take the necessary steps in asserting and securing the Philippines’ sovereign rights over its exclusive economic zone and continental shelf, and in calling on the Chinese government to stop its illegal activities in accordance with the UNCLOS and the 2016 ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.



She lauded the DFA for issuing a strong statement on the incident during the day's press conference and for sending a *note verbale* to Chinese Ambassador Huang Xilian.

She then raised the three following points in pursuit of the spirit of Senate Resolution No. 718:

- The risky maritime maneuvers of the Chinese Coast Guard and militia vessels against the Philippine Coast Guard, as evident in the videos presented by Senate President Zubiri and Senator Tolentino, were clear violations of Rule 10 on the collision regulations of the International Maritime Organization.
- At least seven foreign embassies in the Philippines have voiced the previous day their respective concerns over the actions of the Chinese Coast Guard in the West Philippine Sea and their support for upholding the Philippines' victory in The Hague ruling. She opined that the Philippines should continue to consolidate a coalition of various nations, governments, and private sectors in order to uphold the rule of law on land and at the sea.
- The Senate, under the chairmanship of Senator Tolentino and the newly-constituted Special Committee on Philippine Maritime and Admiralty Zones, will shortly hold hearings on various maritime zones bills.

By Senator Padilla

Ako po ay nakinig sa talumpati ng ating Senate President. Alam ninyo po, ako po ay sapul na sapul sa puso ko at kaluluwa sapagkat ako po mismo ay galing diyan. Isang linggo po ako diyan sa lugar na iyan, at kung gusto ninyo pong mapanood, nariyan iyan sa YouTube ng aking asawa at ang titulo niyan ay "Isang Linggong Pag-Ibig."

Ako po ay naglayag mula sa Navotas papunta diyan sa Pag-asa Island hanggang sa Ayungin Shoal at pabalik. At lahat po ng ipinakita ng ating Senate President ay naranasan po natin iyan—ang makipagtalastasan ng galing doon sa mga Tsino. Hindi nga lamang po tayo nabugahan ng tubig sapagkat sa mga oras na iyon ay hindi naman sila nagkaroon ng pagkakataon sapagkat napakagaling ng kapitan namin. Hindi po kami nakaranas ng ganoong klaseng harassment.

Ang gusto ko lamang pong tumbukin ay kung umaabot na po tayo sa ganitong sitwasyon na ang buong Senado kung saan tayo po ay gigil na gigil na sa ginawa ng Tsino, gusto ko lamang pong ipaalala sa ating lahat na meron din tayong obligasyon dito sa apat na sulok ng Senado. Meron po tayong isang probisyon sa ating Konstitusyon na dapat na ito talagang amyendahan, at iyan po ay patungkol sa pagdedeklara ng Martial Law. Kasi sa 1973 Constitution, malinaw po doon na sinasabi ang "imminent danger." Dito po sa 1987 Constitution, tinanggal po iyong "imminent danger" at ang naiwan na lamang doon ay "invasion" at "rebellion."

Kailan po ba dapat tayo aaksiyon? Iyon po ang tanong ko. Hihintayin pa po ba natin ang invasion? Ang sabi po ng talumpati ng ating Ginoong Pangulo, sila po ay ilang nautical miles na lamang sa Palawan. Hihintayin po ba nating mag-landing muna sila sa Palawan bago po natin baguhin ang Konstitusyon natin at amyendahan, at ilagay natin ang imminent danger? Hindi naman po ibig sabihin ng salitang "martial law" na kapag naideklara, tayo ay magpa-flashback sa 1972. Hindi po ganoon. Ang martial law po ay isang bagay upang ang mga Pilipino ay maorganisa natin nang tama.

At isa pa po, mayroon pa po akong sinabi rin kanina sa hearing ng ating magiting na senador, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, patungkol naman po roon sa mandatory military service. Hindi naman po kaila sa ating kaalaman na ang China, ang Tsino, ang kanilang military service po, ang kanilang reservists, ay baka po daanan lamang tayo, lakaran lamang tayo, ihian lamang tayo ay malunod na tayo. Ang sinasabi ko po, kung ano po iyong gigil sana natin dito ay pantayan natin ng aksiyon natin dito sa apat na sulok ng Senado. Katulad po ng mandatory ROTC. Kahit mandatory ROTC na lamang po sana, sana ay maihanda po natin ang ating mga kababayan at ganoon din po sa usapin ng imminent danger.

At bilang panghuli, nagbuo po kayo ng komite na haharap dito sa maritime na ating sitwasyon. Hinihingi ko po sa kapangyarihan ng ating Ginoong Pangulo na atasan ninyo kami



uli. Kami po mismo ay handa kaming lumayag diyang at maranasan po namin kung ano talaga ang sitwasyon doon. Mas maganda po na maging opisyal na kami po ay bigyan ninyo ng kalayaan na muling maglayag diyang at handa po ako na ulitin kong gawin kung ano po ang ginawa ko noong 2021 para ako po ay personal na makapag-report sa komite kung ano po ang aking naranasan.

By Senator Legarda

I rise to support our Senate President in his initial speech and all my esteemed colleagues in their speeches in condemning the incident by the Chinese Coast Guard. Allow me to just put on record a statement I made today. I want it in the Senate records. I condemn in the highest form China Coast Guard's recent blockade, dangerous maneuvers, and use of water cannons against the Philippine Coast Guard vessels escorting boats chartered by the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

These actions are not only reckless but they are also illegal and endanger the lives of Filipinos. This violates international conventions endangering our crew at sea. We demand that the Chinese Coast Guard respect our sovereign rights, refrain from hindering freedom of navigation, and hold those involved accountable. Safe access to Ayungin Shoal is crucial for supplying our military troops. China must follow international law. Ayungin Shoal is a low-tide elevation part of the Philippines' exclusive economic zone and continental shelf pursuant to the 1982 UNCLOS, and as affirmed by the 2016 Arbitral award. This is final and binding. We also commend the Department of Foreign Affairs for its prompt action by filing a diplomatic protest against China and summoning Chinese Ambassador Huang Xilian over the incident.

We call on the Philippine Coast Guard and the Armed Forces of the Philippines to ensure the well-being of those involved. And I will go one step further to encourage my colleagues to provide the necessary resources for the Philippine Coast Guard, the Philippine Navy, and even the LGUs in the area so that it will be a whole-of-government approach—not just the military, not just the Navy, not just the Coast Guard, but even for research laboratories in the area, so that we can fully utilize and exploit the areas for the benefit of the Filipino people because this is, undoubtedly, part of Philippine territory.

Having said that, we thank the Senate President and all our colleagues for having brought this matter to our attention once again.

By Senator Pimentel

At the outset, Senator Pimentel noted that the Body desired a larger role in determining the Philippine response to the frequent incidents in the West Philippine Sea and South China Sea. However, he noted the adage that "legislative work occurs at the committee level." By analogy, he opined that since the Senate has a constitutionally mandated role in foreign affairs, it should share its ideas with the Executive branch, but not in plenary. To ensure a free exchange of ideas between senators and officials of the Office of the President, led by the President, as well as the DFA and the DND, among others, he suggested that a closed-door, informal workshop be held. He also suggested that the Senate play a more active, proactive, and not merely reactive role in determining foreign policy in international relations.

In terms of strategies, Senate President Zubiri concurred that certain suggestions should not be shared to the country's neighbor in the North. He disclosed that President Marcos would convene a command conference to discuss specific military action and actions within the United Nations and the community of nations.

The Senate President stated that the Philippines could learn from Vietnam, which boycotted all Chinese-made products as it veered away from China, its former top trading partner. He stated that its top trading partners are now the western nations, including the European Union, and it is negotiating free trade agreements with the United States, South Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

In lieu of military action, Senate President Zubiri suggested that the country's Trade department may consider engaging with non-Chinese companies, particularly in the construction services sector. He proposed that the DPWH blacklist Chinese construction and engineering companies in response to the Chinese government's recent actions. He lamented that the Chinese State Foreign Ministry officials made a startling declaration in an interview with CNN that the West Philippine Sea is "undisputedly" their territory, claiming the area categorically and unilaterally without even consulting its neighbors.

Concurring with Senator Pimentel that certain sensitive issues should be discussed in an executive session, Senate President Zubiri expressed his disgust, dismay, and disappointment at media personalities who have referred to the Senate as "stupid" and "ignorant" and who do not understand the country's foreign-policy decision. He stated that the Filipinos must awaken and move, or else Palawan may become a part of China.

Senator Pimentel reiterated his call for a closed-door strategy discussion with the Executive branch.

Senate President Zubiri assured the soldiers, military personnel, Coast Guard, and residents of Pag-asa Island of the Senate's support. He promised that the Body would introduce projects in the area for 2024.

By Senator Villanueva

Taos-puso po ang suporta natin sa ating Senate President, sa kaniyang ibinahagi na privilege speech ngayong araw na ito.

Tunay po na nakakagimbal, nakakasulasok, at nakakakulo ng dugo ang mga nakita at narining natin. Hindi po ito gawain ng isang kaibigan.

Noong isang araw, nai-define ko sa Bulwagang ito kung ano ang ibig sabihin ng "bully," at lahat po roon ay check. Ngayon po kapag i-define naman natin ang salitang kaibigan o "friend," lahat po ay ekis.

Muli, nais po nating ilagay sa talaan ng Bulwagang ito ang taos-pusong suporta hindi lamang kay Senate President Zubiri, sa mga sinabi ng ating mga kasamahan sa Bulwagang ito, suporta rin sa ating mga sundalo, AFP, Coast Guard, Navy, at iba pa na nagtatanggol sa ating soberanya.

Mariin po nating kinokondena ang tahasang agresyon ng Tsina sa loob ng ating teritoryo, sa loob ng ating economic zone. Gusto po nating ipaalala sa bansang Tsina na, kasama ang mga miyembro ng ASEAN, kasama po sila sa Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea noong 2002. This reflects the consensus reached by parties on seeking peaceful solution.

Again, I will remind the Chinese government, the Chinese officials, that ASEAN member-states, and China itself issued that Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea in 2002, which reflects the consensus reached by all parties in seeking peaceful solution of disputes and pursuing maritime cooperation. This is accordance with principles of international law, including that of the 1987 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, among others.

Clearly, maliwanag pa sa sikat ng araw, na hindi ino-honor o sinusunod ng bansang Tsina ang agreement na ito. Nais natin ipahiwatig hindi lamang sa Bulwagang ito, hindi lamang sa apat na sulok ng ating bansang Pilipinas, kundi sa bawat sulok ng daigdig na hindi sila tumutupad sa agreement na ito; hindi nila ino-honor ang agreement na ito. Bagkos, sinasabi nila na sila ay kaibigan.

Lastly, nais nating ipabatid hindi lamang po sa Tsina kundi sa buong mundo na tayo ay mga Pilipino—hindi sanay tumiklop sa ano mang laban. Hindi po tayo pasisiil. Pilipino po tayo at hindi naaantig sa ano mang laban. Hindi aatras sa ano mang laban. Lalo na po kung ang laban na iyan ay laban ng soberanya at karapatan ng bawat mamamayang Pilipino.

By Senator Go

I rise to express my deepest resentment and condemnation over the latest harassment of the Chinese Coast Guard after they used water cannons against our vessels while on a peaceful resupply mission going to the Ayungin Shoal.

Stop bullying us. *Grabeng respeto po ang ibinigay sa inyo noong panahon po ng ating Pangulong Duterte. Sa anim na taon, ibinigay ni Pangulong Duterte ang lahat ng respeto.*

Gaya ng sinabi ko noon, kahit maliit lamang tayo na bansa, huwag ninyo kaming apihin dahil kilala naman po ang Pilipino na matatapang, lumalaban, at ipinaglalaban ang aming karapatan. What is ours is ours. We must remain consistent with our foreign policy of being friends to all and enemies to none, but we must also stand firm on protecting our sovereignty.

This latest incident is irresponsible and contrary to China's repeated assurances of peacefully settling whatever misunderstandings we have over the West Philippine Sea.

I am appealing to Pres. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Romualdez Marcos Jr., as the chief architect of our foreign policy, to always safeguard the safety of our personnel and our national interest. I am confident that the President will always uphold our sovereign rights over the West Philippine Sea with the help of our partners.

Maraming beses na po ito na-bring up ni dating Pangulong Duterte at naipanalò natin sa arbitral ruling sa kaniyang mga bilateral talks noon sa bansang Tsina. Ang tanong: Who will enforce and who can enforce?

This is not only a concern of the Philippines but the whole world, as we appeal to the international community for them to show sincerity, not only with their words, but also with their actions of respecting fellow states.

As vice chair of the Senate Committee on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation, *tiwala po ako sa dedikasyon ng ating Armed Forces of the Philippines at Philippine Coast Guard na pangangalagaan ang ating interes diyan sa West Philippine Sea.* On our part, let us continue to support the AFP modernization.

Moreover, I also filed Senate Bill No. 2112, which aims to modernize the Philippine Coast Guard to help them in the enforcement of Philippine laws in our maritime zone, *para magkaroon sila ng bagong kagamitan, equipment, infrastructure, training, at manpower nang sa ganoon ay mababantayan nila ang ating borders.*

Let us always be reminded that what is ours is ours. *Ipaglaban at isulong natin kung ano ang para sa atin.*

By Senator Dela Rosa

Saying that the Visayan word for a two-faced or deceitful person is "*tambaloslos*," Senator Dela Rosa also asserted that because a fired attack would trigger the Mutual Defense Treaty with the United States, China's strategy was to instead fire water cannons at Philippine Coast Guard vessels, which was tantamount to a fired attack because the impact of high-pressure water could also cause injury or death or, at the very least, shatter glass windows.

Consequently, he supported Senate President Zubiri's call to urge the Executive branch to assert the nation's sovereign rights against Chinese aggression.

By Senator Hontiveros

Senator Hontiveros added, in further support of Senate President Zubiri's privilege speech, that the Philippines could show its displeasure with China, not only politically and diplomatically but also economically, such as by banning the operation of Chinese Communications Construction Company (CCCC), a Chinese state-owned company that is currently constructing the Samal Island-Davao City Connector and the North and South Harbor Bridge projects. She mentioned that the China

Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), a subsidiary of CCCC, had recently inked a new contract to complete the second phase of CAVITEX C-5 connection line. She recalled that in 2020, she had already called for the cancellation of projects with CCCC due to the latter's involvement in several dredging activities and the construction of artificial militarized islands in the West Philippine Sea and the country's exclusive economic zones. She believed that if the government had heeded her warning, similar incidents would not have continued.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair referred Senate President Zubiri's privilege speech and the interpellations and manifestations thereon to the Special Committee on Philippine Maritime and Admiralty Zones as the primary committee, and to the Committee on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation as the secondary committee.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the *Journal* of Session No. 6 (August 2, 2023) and considered it approved.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 2328, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AID TO INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES SEEKING MEDICAL, FUNERAL, FOOD, TRANSPORTATION, EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE, PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES, INSTITUTIONALIZING FOR THIS PURPOSE THE ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS IN CRISIS SITUATION (AICS) PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD), APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

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

Senate Bill No. 2329, entitled

AN ACT SEPARATING THE SIBUCO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL-PANGIAN ANNEX IN BARANGAY PANGIAN, MUNICIPALITY OF SIBUCO, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE FROM THE SIBUCO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS THE PANGIAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committee on Rules

Senate Bill No. 2330, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING LAKE BABABU LOCATED IN BARANGAY MELGAR IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BASILISA, PROVINCE OF DINAGAT ISLANDS A TOURIST DESTINATION, PROVIDING FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committees on Tourism; Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2331, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING POLICIES TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS ACTS OF BULLYING AND OTHER SIMILAR ACTS IN THE WORKPLACE

Introduced by Senator Villar (M)

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

Senate Bill No. 2332, entitled

AN ACT REDEFINING THE CRIME OF ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT COMMITTED BY A SYNDICATE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AS AMENDED, AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8042, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE MIGRANT WORKERS AND OVERSEAS FILIPINOS ACT OF 1995, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Villar (M)

To the Committee on Migrant Workers

Senate Bill No. 2333, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A TRIPARTITE COUNCIL TO ADDRESS UNEMPLOYMENT, UNDEREMPLOYMENT, AND THE JOB-SKILLS MISMATCH PROBLEM IN THE COUNTRY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Villar (M)

To the Committees on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2334, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC VETERINARY CLINIC IN EVERY CITY AND MUNICIPALITY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Villar (M)

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

Senate Bill No. 2335, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR MANDATORY INSURANCE COVERAGE AND BENEFITS FOR JOURNALISTS, EMPLOYEES OF MEDIA ENTITIES ON FIELD ASSIGNMENTS AND FREELANCE JOURNALISTS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villar (M)

To the Committee on Public Information and Mass Media

Senate Bill No. 2336, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING ALL FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS TO DISCLOSE POTENTIAL ALLERGENS IN THEIR FOOD PRODUCTS

Introduced by Senator Villar (M)

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

Senate Bill No. 2337, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING DISCOUNTED OR WAIVED FEES AND CHARGES TO INDIGENT JOB SEEKERS IN THE ISSUANCE OF CERTAIN PREEMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Introduced by Senator Villar (M)

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

Senate Bill No. 2338, entitled

AN ACT INCORPORATING SCAM PREVENTION EDUCATION IN THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULA, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villar (M)

To the Committees on Basic Education; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2339, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFW) HOSPITAL AND OFW CARE IN ALL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH-RETAINED HOSPITALS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Tulfo

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

Senate Bill No. 2340, entitled

AN ACT CONVERTING THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS HOSPITAL AS A LEVEL III HOSPITAL UNDER DIRECT SUPERVISION AND CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MIGRANT WORKERS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committees on Migrant Workers; Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2341, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE INCLUSION OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, OTHER THAN ENGLISH, AS AN ELECTIVE COURSE IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education

Senate Bill No. 2342, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NURSING SCHOLARSHIP AND RETURN SERVICE PROGRAM FOR DESERVING STUDENTS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 2343, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR MANDATORY INSURANCE COVERAGE AND BENEFITS FOR ALL LINE WORKERS

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committees on Energy; and Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 2344, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR CITIZENS PARTICIPATION IN LEGISLATIVE POLICYMAKING THROUGH THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committees on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation; and Public Information and Mass Media

Senate Bill No. 2345, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE SPECIAL PROGRAM IN THE ARTS FOR JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committees on Basic Education; Culture and the Arts; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2346, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION FIVE (5) (C) OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7432 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE SENIOR CITIZENS ACT OF 1992 AS AMENDED, TO MANDATE AND FURTHER BROADEN THE SCOPE OF A GERIATRIC WARD, TO INCLUDE BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE HOSPITALS, INSTITUTIONS, INFIRMARIES, AND WELLNESS CENTERS

Introduced by Senator Tolentino

To the Committees on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Health and Demography; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 2347, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING BULABOG-PUTIAN NATIONAL PARK LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF DINGLE AND SAN ENRIQUE, IN THE PROVINCE OF ILOILO, A PROTECTED AREA WITH THE CATEGORY OF "NATURAL PARK" TO BE NAMED AS "BULABOG-PUTIAN NATIONAL PARK" UNDER THE NATIONAL INTEGRATED PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM (NIPAS), PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Villar (C)

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

Senate Bill No. 2348, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING FURTHER THE ELECTRIC POWER INDUSTRY AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 43, 45, 46, 47, 57, 60, 61, 62, 63, 70, AND 71 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9136, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ELECTRIC POWER INDUSTRY REFORM ACT OF 2001

Introduced by Senator Tulfo

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

Senate Bill No. 2349, entitled

AN ACT EXEMPTING QUALIFIED OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWS) FROM THE COVERAGE OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10912, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2016

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committees on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Migrant Workers

Senate Bill No. 2350, entitled

AN ACT TRANSFORMING THE FILM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF THE PHILIPPINES INTO THE NATIONAL FILM COMMISSION OF THE PHILIPPINES, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committees on Public Information and Mass Media; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2351, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE NURSING LAW TOWARDS A QUALITY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, REPEALING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9173, OR THE PHILIPPINE NURSING ACT OF 2002

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committees on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2353, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR GERIATRIC HEALTH AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, CREATING REGIONAL GERIATRIC SPECIALTY CENTERS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH-RETAINED HOSPITALS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Lapid

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

Senate Bill No. 2354, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A REVISED NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM, CLARIFYING THE STANDARDS FOR TRAINING AND ENGAGEMENT OF APPRENTICES AND ACCREDITATION OF APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS, AND REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE CHAPTERS I AND II OF TITLE II, BOOK II OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE

NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 2355, entitled

AN ACT ENCOURAGING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, PROVIDING INCENTIVES THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship

Senate Bill No. 2356, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL P12,000 INCREASE IN THE MINIMUM PAY OF EMPLOYEES AND WORKERS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR NATIONWIDE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSE

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committees on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2357, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY INSTITUTIONALIZING A SUSTAINABLE FINANCING PROGRAM FOR MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES THROUGH THE PONDO SA PAGBABAGO AT PAG-ASENSO PROGRAM, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 2358, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING BAMBOO INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES, CREATING THE BAMBOO INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CENTER (BIDC), APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 2359, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING FEBRUARY 23 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY TO BE KNOWN AS "NATIONAL ROTARY DAY"

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committee on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development

Senate Bill No. 2360, entitled

AN ACT UPGRADING AND CREATING ADDITIONAL POSITIONS IN THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT CORPORATE COUNSEL, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 878 DATED 4 MARCH 1983, AS AMENDED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 299 DATED 26 JULY 1987

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2361, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A SYSTEM OF EARLIER VOTING FOR QUALIFIED SENIOR CITIZENS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES OF THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committees on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2362, entitled

AN ACT ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY IN THE VOTING OF SENIOR CITIZENS, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, PREGNANT WOMEN, AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10366, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committees on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2363, entitled

AN ACT PRESCRIBING THE USE OF NEO-ETHNIC PHILIPPINE TEXTILES IN THE ACADEMIC REGALIA OF ALL STATE AND LOCAL UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 2364, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE SPECIAL PROGRAM IN CREATIVE ARTS FOR JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committees on Basic Education; Culture and the Arts; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2365, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING AUGUST 1 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY TO BE KNOWN AS THE PROMULGATION OF THE SOLEMN DECLARATION OF PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Culture and the Arts

Senate Bill No. 2366, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING SEPTEMBER 1 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON, TO BE KNOWN AS "ARAW NG BUKIDNON," IN COMMEMORATION OF ITS FOUNDATION ANNIVERSARY

Introduced by Senator Zubiri

To the Committee on Local Government

Senate Bill No. 2368, entitled

AN ACT EXPANDING THE COVERAGE OF ESPIONAGE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 616, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT TO PUNISH ESPIONAGE AND OTHER OFFENSES AGAINST THE NATIONAL SECURITY," AND PROVIDING HIGHER PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committee on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Report No. 98, prepared and submitted jointly by the Committees on Basic Education; Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; Ways and Means; and Finance, on Senate Bill No. 2367, with Senators Gatchalian, Villar (C), Revilla Jr., Villanueva, Legarda, Escudero, and Angara as authors thereof, entitled

AN ACT ENSURING THAT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES UNDER THE K TO 12 PROGRAM ARE EQUIPPED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND SKILLS DEMANDED IN THE LABOR MARKET, ENHANCING THEIR EMPLOYABILITY AND COMPETITIVENESS, CREATING THE BATANG MAGALING COUNCILS TO STRENGTHEN MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT FOR THEIR EMPLOYMENT, ALLOWING DEDUCTION OF TRAINING EXPENSES INCURRED FOR THEIR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,

recommending its approval in substitution of Senate Bill No. 2022.

Sponsor: Senator Gatchalian

To the Calendar for Ordinary Business

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that on 1 August 2023, the House of Representatives designated Representatives Dimaporo (MK), Mastura, Dimaporo (SA), Adiong, Balindong, Hataman, and Abalos as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee, on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 5693, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING THE FIRST DAY OF FEBRUARY OF EVERY YEAR AS NATIONAL HIJAB DAY AND PROMOTING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE MUSLIM TRADITION OF WEARING A HIJAB; and

Senate Bill No. 1410, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING THE FIRST DAY OF FEBRUARY OF EVERY YEAR AS THE NATIONAL DAY FOR AWARENESS ON THE HIJAB AND OTHER TRADITIONAL GARMENTS AND ATTIRE.

To the Committee on Rules

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that on 26 July 2023, the House of Representatives adopted House Concurrent Resolution No. 16, entitled

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR FOR THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Archives

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 2369, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING HIGHER ACCIDENT AND LIFE INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AND HOLDING CONTRACTORS LIABLE FOR WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS

Introduced by Senator Tulfo

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 2370, entitled

AN ACT EXEMPTING FROM INCOME TAXATION THE HONORARIA, ALLOWANCES, AND OTHER FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF TEACHERS RENDERING SERVICE DURING AN ELECTION PERIOD

Introduced by Senator Binay

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

Senate Bill No. 2371, entitled

AN ACT DESIGNATING THE SECOND SUNDAY OF SEPTEMBER AS THE NATIONAL GRANDPARENTS' DAY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

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

Senate Bill No. 2372, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING AUGUST 9 OF EVERY YEAR AS THE PHILIPPINES-ISRAEL FRIENDSHIP DAY

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

To the Committees on Culture and the Arts; and Foreign Relations

Senate Bill No. 2373, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THE METRO BATAAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Ejercito

To the Committees on Local Government; Government Corporations and Public Enterprises; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 2374, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE ONLINE PLACING OF BETS FOR ALL LOTTO GAMES AND ALL INSTANT PAPER GAMES

Introduced by Senator Tulfo

To the Committees on Ways and Means; and Public Order and Dangerous Drugs

Senate Bill No. 2375, entitled

AN ACT EXEMPTING MOTORCYCLES FROM THE COVERAGE OF MOTOR VEHICLE ROAD USER'S TAX, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8794, ENTITLED "AN ACT IMPOSING A MOTOR VEHICLE USER'S CHARGE ON OWNERS OF ALL TYPES OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES," AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11239

Introduced by Senator Tulfo

To the Committees on Ways and Means; and Public Services

Senate Bill No. 2376, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR MANDATORY INSURANCE COVERAGE AND
BENEFITS FOR ALL LINE WORKERS

Introduced by Senator Tulfo

**To the Committees on Energy; and Labor, Employment and Human Resources
Development**

Senate Bill No. 2377, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR BLUE ECONOMY, PROMOTING
STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF COASTAL AND
MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND RESOURCES

Introduced by Senator Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 2378, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6938, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
"COOPERATIVE CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES," AS AMENDED, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Estrada

To the Committees on Cooperatives; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 2379, entitled

AN ACT GIVING SENIOR CITIZENS A TWENTY PERCENT (20%) DISCOUNT
ON TRAVEL TAX, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7432, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT TO MAXI-
MIZE THE CONTRIBUTION OF SENIOR CITIZENS TO NATION
BUILDING, GRANT BENEFITS AND SPECIAL PRIVILEGES AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES"

Introduced by Senator Estrada

**To the Committees on Ways and Means; and Social Justice, Welfare and Rural
Development**

Senate Bill No. 2380, entitled

AN ACT PENALIZING CERTAIN ACTS IN THE IMPOSITION OF EXCESSIVE
PLACEMENT FEES AGAINST OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committee on Migrant Workers

Senate Bill No. 2381, entitled

AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND THE SYSTEM OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 23 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8042, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE MIGRANT WORKERS AND OVERSEAS FILIPINOS ACT OF 1995, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committee on Migrant Workers

Senate Bill No. 2382, 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 Lapid

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

Senate Bill No. 2383, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR PROTECTION OF THE REMITTANCES OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committees on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies; Migrant Workers; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 2384, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE RULES ON THE CREATION, MODIFICATION, CHANGE AND REGISTRATION OF OFFICIAL SEALS AND OTHER HERALDIC ITEMS AND DEVICES OF GOVERNMENT ENTITIES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT 8491 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "FLAG AND HERALDIC CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES"

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committee on Culture and the Arts

Senate Bill No. 2385, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8293, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Revilla Jr.

To the Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship

RESOLUTIONS

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 719, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING THE PENTECOSTAL MISSIONARY CHURCH OF CHRIST (4TH WATCH) ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 50TH GOLDEN CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

Introduced by Senators Villar (C), Go, Marcos, and Binay

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 720, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM, ALSO KNOWN AS THE "FILIPINAS," FOR THEIR PHENOMENAL AND HISTORIC PERFORMANCE AT THE 2023 FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Introduced by Senators Cayetano (P), Cayetano (AP), Zubiri, Villanueva, and Angara

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 721, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE DISCOVERY OF SEVERED HUMAN BODY PARTS IN A SEPTIC TANK AT THE NEW BILIBID PRISON, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF RECOMMENDING LEGISLATIVE MEASURES THAT WOULD ENSURE THE PROMOTION AND SAFEGUARDING THE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF EVERY PERSON DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY

Introduced by Senator Dela Rosa

To the Committee on Justice and Human Rights

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee Report No. 99, prepared and submitted jointly by the Committees on Ways and Means, Local Government; and Finance, on Senate Bill No. 2386, with Senators Zubiri, Revilla Jr., Cayetano (P), Estrada, Villanueva, and Gatchalian as authors thereof, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING REFORMS IN REAL PROPERTY VALUATION AND ASSESSMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES, REORGANIZING THE BUREAU OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,

recommending its approval in substitution of Senate Bill Nos. 314, 693, 897, 1018, and 1473, taking into consideration House Bill No. 6558.

Sponsor: Senator Gatchalian

To the Calendar for Ordinary Business

Committee Report No. 100, prepared and submitted by the Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship, on Senate Bill No. 2387, with Senators Angara, Villar (M), Legarda, and Villanueva as authors thereof, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL OR NATURAL (UNPROCESSED OR WILD) PRODUCTS, PROCESSED PRODUCTS, WINES AND SPIRITS, OR ANY PRODUCTS OF HANDICRAFT OR INDUSTRY,

recommending its approval in substitution of Senate Bill No. 1868.

Sponsor: Senator Angara

To the Calendar for Ordinary Business

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR ESTRADA

At this juncture, Senator Estrada delivered the following statement:

Ang buwan ng Agosto ay itinalagang "Buwan ng Wikang Pambansa" sa ilalim ng Pampanguluhang Proklamasyon Bilang 1041 ni dating Pang. Fidel V. Ramos na inilathala noong 1997.

Ipinahahayag nito ang taunang pagdiriwang ng Buwan ng Wikang Pambansa tuwing ika-1 hanggang ika-30 ng Agosto. Gayon din, sa darating na ika-19 ng Agosto ay ang ika-145 kaarawan ng kinikilala nating "Ama ng Wikang Pambansa" na si dating Pang. Manuel Luis Quezon.

Itinakda rin po ng ating Saligang Batas, sa ilalim ng Artikulo 14, ika-anim na seksyon, na ang pambansang wika ng Pilipinas ay Filipino.

Sa katunayan, ang tema ng selebrasyon ngayong taon, sa pangunguna ng Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, ay "Filipino at mga Katutubong Wika: Wika ng Kapayapaan, Seguridad, at Inklusibong Pagpapatupad ng Katarungang Panlipunan."

Kaya naman, bilang pakikiisa sa paggunita ng mahalagang pagdiriwang na ito, hinihikayat ko po ang ating mga kagalang-galang na kasamahan sa Senado na gamitin ang wikang pambansa sa ating mga talakayan at diskurso rito sa Senado sa buong buwan ng Agosto. Naniniwala po ako na ang munting hakbang ng Bulwagang ito ay magkakaroon ng malaking ambag upang higit na mapalapit ang Kapulungan sa ating mga kababayan at sa taumbayan na ating pinaglilingkuran. Higit na nakararami ang maaaring makapakinig, makaunawa, at aktibong makibahagi sa mga nangyayaring debate at talakayan sa ating mga panukalang batas, maging sa mga isinagawa nating pagdinig, kung ang wikang Filipino ang ating gagamitin.

Inaanyayahan ko po ang ating mga butihing kasamahan at kapwa mambabatas na makiisa sa pagdiriwang na ito bilang pagpapakita ng ating pagtangkilik, pagpapahalaga, at pagmamahal sa ating wikang pambansa na malaking bahagi ng ating pagkakakilanlan bilang mga Pilipino.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Estrada, the session was suspended.

It was 6:00 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:55 p.m., the session was resumed with Senate President Zubiri presiding.

INQUIRY OF SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI

At this juncture, Senate President Zubiri inquired if the proposed use of Filipino in the conduct of the Senate's affairs for the entire month of August would be limited only to Tagalog, or whether other languages such as Bisaya could also be used. In response, Senator Villanueva surmised that other Philippine languages besides Tagalog may be used throughout the month.

REFERRAL OF THE MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR ESTRADA

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair referred Senator Estrada's manifestation regarding the use of Filipino in the conduct of the session to the Committee on Rules.

Senate President Zubiri then begged the indulgence of the Chamber for his limited command of the Tagalog language, but vowed do his best to deliver in that regard.

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 62 ON SENATE BILL NO. 2034

(Continuation)

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 2034 (Committee Report No. 62), entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION, DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING, ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF RESERVE OFFICERS' TRAINING CORPS (ROTC) PROGRAM IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Dela Rosa, sponsor of the measure, and Senator Padilla for his interpellation.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR PADILLA

Preliminarily, Senator Padilla asserted his belief that military service is a constitutional mandate. He then expressed his full support for the measure mandating the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program in higher educational institutions (HEIs) and technical vocational institutions (TVIs) amid issues concerning the subject.

Noting Section 4 of the bill, titled "Mandatory Basic ROTC in Higher Education Institutions and Technical-Vocational Institutions," which provided for the institutionalization of "the mandatory basic ROTC Program in HEIs and TVIs for all students enrolled in not less than two-year undergraduate degree, diploma, or certificate programs in HEIs and TVIs," Senator Padilla sought clarification regarding the typical length of academic programs offered by both institutions of learning.

In response, Senator Dela Rosa stated that the mandatory basic ROTC program would last for four semesters, or two years, for both HEIs and TVIs. In addition, he stated that HEIs offer four-year courses, while TVIs offer two-year courses. Relative thereto, he believed that while there would be no cause for concern regarding HEIs, the issue of TVIs demanded more attention from the Body. He informed the Body that students enrolled in courses lasting less than two years would be automatically exempted from said basic mandatory program and would not be required to complete training as a condition for graduation. He reiterated that those enrolling in two-year

courses are still required to undergo the program, which must be completed should be finished in the span of two years or four semesters.

As to whether the TVI requirement would be applicable to all Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) programs, Senator Dela Rosa clarified that TVIs are TESDA-accredited technical-vocational institutions. In that regard, he said that if the institutions were not accredited by TESDA, they could be required to implement the program, nor could the government compel them to do so. He stated that to his knowledge, TESDA accreditation is held by all TVIs that are operating in the country.

With regard to Section 7 of the proposed measure, titled "Benefits for Undergoing Basic ROTC Program," which states: "ROTC cadets are entitled to the following benefits: a) Subject to existing laws and rules on the use and design of military uniform and insignias and provisions of this Act, students undergoing basic ROTC Program shall be provided with free one (1) set of uniform including combat boots," Senator Padilla sought clarification as to whether the government would provide free uniform to students attending private institutions. He expressed concern that the matter would result in a loss for private institutions, or worse, they would pass on the additional costs to their students in the form of increased school fees.

In response, Senator Dela Rosa clarified that there was no distinction between students attending public and private institutions, and that all first year students, regardless of institution type, would receive one free set of ROTC uniforms, including combat boots, for the duration of the program. In addition, he stated that the measure prohibits schools from covering uniform-related expenses.

As to whether students from private institutions are prevented from buying ROTC uniform components, such as combat boots, with qualities they deem more to their liking, Senator Dela Rosa said it would depend on the appreciation of the implementors of the ROTC Program in the private institutions. He added that there will be no issue as long as the combat boots are in accordance with the standard maintained by an ROTC unit.

Asked if there would be discrimination in regard to the subject, Senator Dela Rosa opined that if purchasing combat boots at a higher price would mean comfort and a better fit to the cadets, such a factor may be given relative weight by ROTC program implementers at private institutions. However, he believed that a difference in the height of the cadets' combat boots could pose as a problem if they were already standing next to each other in a formation. He recalled that during his time as a cadet, even without free combat boots, students were allowed to borrow from other students who had completed the program, so long as the boots met military specifications. He emphasized that, ultimately, everything depended on how the measure was implemented once it became law.

Asked how much was required to implement the measure, Senator Dela Rosa informed the Body that the ROTC program would be implemented in phases, beginning with a pilot program, until additional institutions demonstrated their readiness to follow suit. He stated that for 2023, or the first year of implementation, P5.2 million would be required, with the succeeding years requiring increasing amounts: 2024, P4.8 billion; third quarter of 2024 (Phase 3), P5.5 billion; and 2025 (Phase 4), P8 billion. He stated that the initial implementation would require an annual budget of P8 billion.

In response, Senator Padilla stated despite the fact that the amounts mentioned may initially appear large, he believed that consistent implementation of the law required such figures, as they would eventually translate into a good investment for the youth and the country as a whole, given the sovereignty and security issues the nation was currently facing.

In conclusion, he reiterated his full support for the proposed measure.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 2034

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

SPECIAL ORDER

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the transfer of Committee Report No. 100 on Senate Bill No. 2387 from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders.

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 100 ON SENATE BILL NO. 2387

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Second Reading, Senate Bill No. 2387 (Committee Report No. 100), entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL OR NATURAL (UNPROCESSED OR WILD) PRODUCTS, PROCESSED PRODUCTS, WINES AND SPIRITS, OR ANY PRODUCTS OF HANDICRAFT OR INDUSTRY.

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

The Chair recognized Senator Angara for the sponsorship.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR ANGARA

Senator Angara, on behalf of the Subcommittee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship, submitted for plenary consideration of the Body, Senate Bill No. 2387 under Committee Report No. 100.

Following is the full text of Senator Angara's sponsorship speech:

Bilang chairperson ng subcommittee ng Trade, Commerce, and Entrepreneurship, sa ilalim ng liderato ng ating chairperson, Sen. Mark A. Villar, taas-noo kaming tumatayo ngayon para ihain sa Bulwagang ito ang Committee Report No. 100 hinggil sa Senate Bill No. 2387, o ang tinatawag na Protected Geographical Indications Act.

Ang panukalang batas ay iniakda ng inyong lingkod, ng Chairman ng ating mother committee na si Sen. Mark A. Villar, ni Majority Leader Joel Villanueva, at ni Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda, Kawangis ito ng panukalang House Bill No. 531 na inihain ni Bataan Province 1st District Rep. Geraldine Roman. Nagpapasalamat rin kami kay Rep. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" A. Mariño, ang Chairman ng House Committee on Trade, dahil na-file naman niya ang House Bill No. 8657 na kapareha ng bersyon na aming inii-sponsor ngayon.

Bilang mga Pilipino, kilalang-kilala natin at madalas ipinagmalaki ang napakadaming produkto na nagbunga mula sa sikap ng ating mga kababayan. Mga pagkain, damit, o ano pa mang gawang-tao na totoong matatawag nating "Tatak Pinoy."

Kasama dito ang kapeng Barako; puto Calasiao; Bonuan bangus; Ilocos empanada; pili ng Bicol; ang asin Tibuok ng Albuquerque, Bohol; ang Inabel ng Ilocos; ang T'nalak sa South Cotabato; ang Yakan cloth ng Zamboanga at Basilan; ang Hablon ng Iloilo; ang piña weaving ng Aklan at ang sabutan ng Aurora; ang mga sapatos ng Marikina o tsinelas at sandalyas ng Lilliw, Laguna; ang mga woodcarvers ng Paete; mga banga, paso, at iba pang terracotta pottery

ng Tiwi, Albay; pati na rin ang mga balisong ng Taal, Batangas; at ang mga kutsilyo, gunting, labaha, at iba pang mga patalim ng mga panday ng Tabaco City, Albay.

Bawat sulok ng bansa, tiyak na mayroon silang produktong maipagmamalaki hindi lamang sa kapwa Pilipino, kundi pati na rin sa buong mundo. Napakaganda, de kalidad, at tunay na natatangi ang mga ito, kung kaya't idinidikit natin sa kanilang pangalan ang lugar o lunan ng kanilang pinanggalingan. At minsan, dahil dito, pwedeng presyuhan ang mga produktong ito nang mas mataas kumpara sa mga nakikita sa regular na merkado.

Ngunit, hanggang ngayon, wala po tayong sistema o polisiya para masigurado na kapag sinabing galing sa isang lugar ang isang produkto, tunay nga itong nanggaling doon. Walang epektibong mekanismo para mapigilan ang kahit sino man na manlinlang at manloko para lang makabenta sila sa mas mataas na presyo. Walang mabilis na paraan para protektahan ang mga magsasaka, sastre, manghahabi, sapatero, panday, at artesano na simpleng naghahanap-buhay lamang po.

This is a gap in our policies that the proposed measure seeks to fill. By establishing a framework for protecting the so-called geographical indication, or GI, we ensure that when a product is sold in the market under the notion that it is of a specific provenance, or comes from a specific place, or it is grown or made by a specific group of people, such claims are authentic or verifiable.

What are GIs?

Geographical indications (GIs) are a form of intellectual property and refer to any outward sign or mark that identifies a good or product as originating from a specific territory or locality, and, hence, as having a specific quality, reputation, or characteristic.

Think of how products that say “Made in Japan” or “Made in Germany” are regarded or thought of as having superior quality, and hence, are able to command higher prices in the market. Our bill basically makes sure that when a product conveys that it is made or grown from a specific place, it really is made or grown from that specific place.

Benefits of GIs

During one of our “Tatak Pinoy” hearings these past few weeks, the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOP) explained that there were broad benefits to having a system for protecting and encouraging GIs.

First, GIs are believed to have economic benefits. Various studies have shown that when producers utilize GIs or similar quality certification schemes, they are able to capture a price premium for these products.

For example, a 2004 white paper from the European Union (EU), highlighted that at the time, French origin label cheeses earned an average two euros per kilo more than those that were not origin-labelled. The same paper highlighted that French *poulet de bresse*, or white breast chicken, garnered a market price of up to four times larger than the regular French chicken. Such a price premium appears to persist up to today. A 2018 study estimated that French producers who sell quality or point-of-origin labelled cheese and cream products are able to increase their price by 11.5% on average.

Meanwhile, another 2020 study calculated that French wine producers who use geographical indications (GI) earn nearly 150,000 euros more than their counterparts who do not use GIs, while olive specialists who adopt GI labelling receive 63,000 euros more than the non-adopters.

So, aside from price premiums, GIs are also believed to encourage tourism in certain areas. This is especially true with the emergence of what various studies described as gastronomy or food tourism, where local foods and local products have themselves become the main attraction or drawn tourists to visit a certain country or locality.

Aside from the economic benefits, the IPOP explained that there were also social benefits to GIs, through the generation of employment in a locality and, in turn, the prevention of a rural exodus—where the best craftsmen or most skilled farmers leave their hometowns for jobs elsewhere. There are also cultural benefits to these indications, given that they create an entire ecosystem around preserving and highlighting the heritage and identity imbued in traditional

products. Also, environmental benefits, as they can help preserve the biodiversity and landscape of a certain destination.

Na-engganyo kami sa karanasan ng ibang bansa, kasama ang mga kapitbahay natin dito sa ASEAN, noong nag-tagumpay sila gamit ang GI.

Kampot Pepper ng Cambodia

Isang halimbawa ay ang Cambodia at ang produktong Kampot Pepper, na dating kilala bilang Indochinese Pepper. Ang Kampot Pepper daw ang pinakamasarap na paminta sa buong mundo na ginagamit sa mga malinamnam na putahe tulad ng Kampot Pepper Crab at hinahalo sa mga inumin tulad ng Samai Rum at kakaibang pang-himagas, tulad ng To' Ak Chocolate. Siya raw ang "champagne of peppers," kaya puwedeng umabot sa \$100 kada kilo ang bentahan nito sa mga online markets. Kung farmgate prices ang usapan, ang presyo raw ay \$15 kada kilo ng black pepper, \$25 para sa red pepper, at \$28 para sa white pepper. Dito sa Pilipinas, ang isang kilo ng mga peppercorns ay nabebenta sa P250 hanggang P340 po lamang.

Sinasabi na nakukuha ng Kampot Pepper ang kaniyang kakaibang katangian mula sa balanseng klima ng Probinsiya ng Kampot at ng mataas na quartz at mineral content sa Elephant Mountains kung saan tinatanim ang mga ito. Bukod dito, mula noong ika-labintatlong siglo pa raw nagtatanim ang mga Khmer ng Kampot Pepper sa Cambodia, at naipasa ang kaalaman na ito sa mga sumusunod na henerasyon.

Noong 2010, ni-register ng Ministry of Commerce ng Cambodia ang Kampot Pepper bilang isang GI sa bansa, at sa EU naman noong 2016. Mga miyembro lamang ng Kampot Pepper Promotion Association (KPPA) ang puwedeng magtanim at magbenta nitong produkto. Para manatiling miyembro nitong KPPA or asosasyon at lehitimong magamit ang GI ng Kampot Pepper, kailangan sumunod ang mga nagtatanim sa lahat ng requirements tulad ng mga para sa traceability, sa harvest, at post-harvest facilities.

Malaki po ang naitulong ng pagkakaroon ng GI sa tagumpay ng Cambodia nang dahil sa Kampot Pepper. Noong 2011, isang taon pagkatapos marehistro ang GI para sa Kampot Pepper, nakapag-export ang Cambodia ng \$1.31 million ng pepper o paminta. At noong 2021, umabot na po sa \$29 million ang in-export na pepper ng Cambodia.

Mahalagang ipunto na bago pa narehistro ng Cambodia ang GI ng Kampot Pepper, piling-pili ang nagtatanim ng paminta. Pero noong nakita ng mga magsasaka na maganda ang kita sa Kampot Pepper, unti-unti silang bumalik sa kanayunan at nagtanim. Ngayon, umaabot na raw sa 400 na farmers' groups ang kasama sa KPPA or Kampot Pepper Promotion Association.

Pha Mai Yok Dok Brocade Silk ng Lamphun Province, Thailand

Hindi lang sa tanim o sa pagkain maaaring gamitin ang GI. Puwede itong idikit sa anumang gawang-tao tulad ng tela o damit. Halimbawa po rito ang Pha Mai Yok Dok Brocade Silk na kilalang galing sa probinsiya ng Lamphun sa Thailand. Iyong Brocade Silk mula sa Lamphun daw ang pinakamaganda at pinaka-pino, kaya naibebenta ito sa mas mataas na presyo, halos 50% daw ang agwat sa presyo. Ngunit naging talamak ang pangongopya at pamimirata nito at nagdagsaan sa merkado ng mga fake at mas mura.

Naibsan ang pamimiratang ito noong nirehistro ng gobyerno ng Thailand ang GI para sa Lamphun Brocade Silk noong taong 2007. Mula noon, hindi puwede sabihin na talagang Lamphun Silk ang binibenta ng isang tindahan kung wala itong official seal o marka na galing sa gobyerno ng Thailand. At ngayon po, tanyag sa buong mundo ang Lamphun Silk, lalo na at sinuot ito ni Lisa ng K-Pop group na Black Pink sa isang music video nila.

GIs in the European Union — €75 billion

Siyempre, tumitingin rin po tayo sa EU o European Union (EU) dahil marahil sila ang nauna sa paggamit ng GI bilang isang mekanismo at polisiya para makatulong sa kaunlaran ng kanilang ekonomiya. Ayon nga sa isang pag-aaral ng European Commission, noong 2020, umabot sa €75 billion ang kita o sales revenue ng mga pagkain, inumin, o tanim na may GI. At 20% daw ng halaga na ito ay mga exports ng EU sa ibang bansa.

Sakop po ng pag-aaral na ito ang higit sa 3,200 na produktong galing sa 28 na member-countries ng EU na naka-register na may GI sa katapusan ng 2017. Kasama po rito ang mga

produktong tulad ng mga kesong Gruyere, Emmental, Roquefort, at Comte; mga alak tulad ng Cognac at Champagne; mga prutas tulad ng Valencia oranges; at mga karne tulad ng Jamon Serrano. Nakita rin ng pag-aaral na ito na kalimitan, halos doble ang sales value ng mga produktong may GI kumpara sa mga kawangis na produkto na walang nakadikit na GI.

So, learning about the successes of GIs in other countries is partly what prompted us to file the measure we are sponsoring today.

Salient Points

With the enactment of our proposal, a scheme for the protection, development, and encouragement of geographical indications shall be established. Through such scheme, the State shall endeavor to help producers secure fairer returns for the quality and uniqueness of their products, protect the intellectual property embedded within the GI, provide clear information to consumers on the value-adding attributes of the covered product, manage the system for registering GIs, and, prevent any unfair or anti-competitive practices that may devalue the products or work covered by the GI among many others. That is in Section 4.

Our measure specifically lays out that the Director of the Bureau of Trademarks under the IPOPHIL shall act as the Registrar of Geographical Indications, and thus possess the authority to approve applications for GI registration. A register of protected GIs shall also be developed and maintained to contain the relevant information of all registered GIs.

Should there be any opposition to any application for GI registration, the Bureau of Legal Affairs of the IPOPHIL shall have the authority to adjudicate on such matters. The Bureau shall also be in charge of responding to complaints, infringements or violations of the proposed law.

The measure also outlines that aside from the IPOPHIL, several government agencies, including the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), and even the relevant local government units, shall collaborate to support and encourage the development of domestic products that are worth receiving a GI. These agencies may also conduct capacity-building and research and development activities, such as the formulation of manual of specifications, branding, packaging, and marketing of the GI-protected product.

This measure would affirm our compliance with the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which we were signatory to since January 1995.

While our present Intellectual Property Code already provides for protection of geographical indications, there are several gaps that are measured will bridge. Unlike the IP Code and its existing rules, our proposed measure provides for penalties against GI infringement and protects GI products against unfair competition. It also considers any form of violation of the protected GIs as an offense against the economic interest of the State. What we aim to achieve is the enactment of a *sui generis*, or unique legal system, for protecting geographical indications, one that is specific to our context and harmonized with our existing laws.

Mahalagang ipunto na noong nakaraang Oktubre, ipinatupad ng IPOPHIL ang rules and regulations nito para sa pag-rehistro ng mga GI. At dahil dito, opisyal na nabigyan ang pinakaunang GI sa Pilipinas ang Guimaras mangoes.

Guimaras Mangoes

Noong May 13, 2023, inaprubahan ng Bureau of Trademarks ng IPOPHIL ang application ng Guimaras Mango Growers and Producers Development Cooperative (GMGPDC) para marehistro ang GI ng Guimaras mangoes. Noong 2017, ang farmgate price ng Guimaras mangoes ay P25 kada kilo. Ngayong 2023, tumaas ito from P80 up to P150 per kilo. Bagaman, wala pa raw sa Pilipinas ang na-accredit para mag-export ng mangga, nakapagpadala na ng initial shipment sa Switzerland sa tulong ng GI.

Potential Candidates for GI Coverage

Palalawigin ng aming panukalang batas ang kasalukuyang patakaran para sa pag-rehistro ng GI. At sana kapag naisabatas na ito, mas maraming produkto ang maaaring maisama sa

ilalim ng programang ito. Ayon sa IPOPIL, ang mga sumusunod na 29 na produkto ang may malaking potensiyal para mabigyan ng GI—ang T’Nalak ng Lake Sebu, Davao pomelo, Bikol pili, Batangas barako, Bonuan bangus, Aklan piña cloth, burdang Lumban, Cebu dried Mangoes, heirloom rice ng Cordilleras, Kalinga coffee, Bagtason loom ng Antique, Yakan cloth ng Zamboanga at Basilan, sabutan weave ng Aurora, Camiguin lanzones, Davao cacao, Bohol ube kinampay, asin Tibuok ng Albuquerque, Bohol, Basey Banig ng Samar, buhi weave ng Camarines Sur, Masbate beef at milagros carmelado ng Masbate, Laguna Coffee, Liliw footwear, Paete wood carvings, Benguet strawberries, Benguet cacao, Tuburan coffee, Calauan pineapple, at lambanog ng Quezon, Batangas, at Laguna.

We dream for the Philippines to one day have as diverse, as highly sought after, and as popular a product export list as what the European Union has. Pushing for this measure is but one of the many steps needed to realize this ambition of having more “Tatak Pinoy” products sold and patronized around the world. And that is why we appeal to our colleagues in the Senate, that we all act to approve this very vital measure and help our producers all over the country.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

In cosponsoring Senate Bill No. 2387, Senator Villanueva delivered the following speech:

It is my honor and privilege to cosponsor Senate Bill No. 2387 under Committee Report No. 100, or the “Protected Geographical Indications Act.” We would like to thank and commend the sponsor of the measure, the extra hardworking senator of this august Chamber, Sen. Sonny Angara, for pushing for this measure because he walked the extra mile for this measure.

This Representation is a proud product of the Great Province of Bulacan, known as the “Northern Gateway from Manila.” *Ilan po sa aming mga ipinagmamalaking produkto ng aming mahal na lalawigan ay iyong marble at marbleized limestone, paputok o pyrotechnics—Bocau po iyan—chicharon, buchiron na paborito ng ating mga colleague dito sa Senado at tuwing nagdadala ako rito, mabilis pa sa alas kuwatro nauubos ang bucheron—leather, furniture, sweets, at native delicacies.*

Through this measure, a scheme for protected geographical indications would be established, which identifies a good as originating in a specific geographical area and processing a given quality, reputation, or other characteristic that is essentially attributable to that geographic specific origin. *Layunin po ng panukalang batas na ito na protektahan ang ating mga local producer at ang kanilang mga de-kalidad na produkto pati na rin ang mga konsyumer laban sa mga peke at sub-standard na mga bilihin.*

In October 2022, the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPIL) released the Rules and Regulations on Geographical Indications, aimed at fulfilling the recognition of GIs as protectible intellectual property under the IP Code of 1997.

Just this May, the IPOPIL granted the country’s first-ever registered GI to Guimaras mangoes, and the good gentleman from Aurora explicitly explained *na iyon pong GI seal* would most definitely help in increasing the farmgate price of Guimaras mangoes, and this resulted in additional income for our farmers. According to the Guimaras Mango Growers and Producers Development Cooperative, their product was already averaging P200 per kilo in 2022. It is a huge increase, as mentioned by Senator Angara, from a secured collective mark in 2017 *na P20 to P50 only. Umaasa po tayo na sa tulong ng GI seal ay mas lalaki po ang merkado para sa Guimaras mangoes at tataas din po ang kita ng ating mga growers at producers.*

With the passage of this measure, we will strengthen the protection of GIs in the country by placing safeguards against infringement, pave the way for stronger consumer confidence in product quality, reinforce competitive advantage and growth of local industries, add more value to our product, enhance market access, generate employment *na napakalapit sa ating puso, napakaraming trabaho ang lalo pang maililikha nito,* and increase revenue generation.

Sooner, it is our hope that other high quality products, like their geographical origins, such as Baguio strawberry, Kalinga coffee, Aurora’s sabutan weave, Basilan and Zamboanga’s Yakan cloth, and Bulacan’s buchiron, would also follow Guimaras mangoes in securing their GI seal and

gain global recognition and name recall, much like the world famous Bordeaux wine, Parmesan cheese, Scotch whiskey, Colombian coffee, and Swiss watches, among others.

Muli, maraming salamat po sa ating butihing kasama, ang sponsor ng measure na ito, Sen. Sonny Angara, na may sarili din pong tatak ang hindi matatawarang serbisyo publiko— "Alagang Angara!" Makakaasa po kayo sa ating buong suporta para sa pagsasabatas ng panukalang ito, at muli, nananawagan tayo sa ating mga kasama dito sa Bulwagang ito na suportahan ang panukalang batas na ito.

COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR LEGARDA

Pursuant to the manifestation of Senator Villanueva, following is the cosponsorship speech of Senator Legarda on Senate Bill No. 2387, which was deemed read and inserted into the *Journal and Record of the Senate*:

It is with great pride that I stand before you today to co-sponsor Senate Bill No. 2387, under Committee Report No. 100 or the Protected Geographical Indications Act. I would like to thank the sponsor, Senator Sonny Angara, for his efforts and commitment to advancing this important piece of legislation.

Geographical Indications (GIs) is an intellectual property protection mechanism that has been in the books since the Intellectual Property Code of 1997. I commend the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOP HL) for enacting rules and regulations to operationalize it. This measure seeks to give legislative fiat to GIs and holds immense potential and promotes the recognition and protection of our valuable geographical indications. I am also proud to note that the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is waving the flag for Philippine products in local and international venues.

During the First Regular Session, the Senate and the House of Representatives recently passed the One Town, One Product Philippines Bill, which supports the efforts of each town to take pride in their very best.

Timely as this discussion may seem to be, I must assert that our exertions come a tad late. We have known and loved these products for decades, yet we did too little for too long.

It must have been two years ago when the Cordillera people complained about cheap knockoffs of their indigenous weaves flooding the markets. These bore the same designs but were machine-made on conventional textiles. Virginia Doligas of Easter Weaving Room decried the fraudulent practice and called for protection.

Many other controversies in recent years caused the term "cultural appropriation" to gain viral news status. There was a huge furor over Apo Whang-od, the oldest living practitioner of Kalinga tattoo art, and a famous vlogger's 'appropriation' of her methods for online workshops. It was later argued that Apo Whang-od was not authorized to transact for those methods because these were owned by the Kalinga community as a whole.

Then there was a local brand of outdoor gear that named its sandals after ethnic tribes, much to the tribe's consternation. The tribal members were outraged.

The outcries plainly showed that while there were no clear and specific legal protections and remedies yet, honoring their art was regarded as a moral imperative.

These new regulations issued by the IPOP HL are therefore a welcome development. While it cannot be expected to resolve past controversies or halt attempts at cultural appropriation, it is a very good step toward this end. And giving it further legislative backbone is highly warranted.

Branding that relies on place or location has many advantages, not the least of which are recall, loyalty, and nostalgia. Brands that identify with places evoke memories, sensory impressions, and even poetry and literature. Some consumers purchase products that they associate with places, events, and memories of their travel or their homeland.

But an indication of origin does a great deal more than increase market awareness and ensure sales. It has back-end and frontend implications that go beyond marketing.

We are only starting with Lake Sebu T'nalak, Batangas Barako, Lake Taal Tawilis, Bikol Pili, and Davao Pummelo but I foresee communities jumping in and putting their best foot forward. Locals will be motivated with pride and collective selfworth that their very own are recognized. They will continue to strive for perfection and even variation, confident that they have government recognition and support.

I am elated to see that in my home province of Antique, the patadyong weaving with pinilian design from barangay Bagtason in the Municipality of Bugasong is also considered a potential GI. Patadyong weaving is part of Antique's age-old tradition, and I have made it my mission to continuously support its development and provide the necessary assistance to our weavers. On May 13, 2023, IPOPHL approved the application of the Guimaras Mango Growers and Producers Development Cooperative, making Guimaras mangoes the first registered GI in the Philippines.

We just need to ensure the integration of these efforts with those of the government and other communities will only inspire further developments and an upswing of collective and community fulfillment.

In the midst of all these opportunities, let us also remind ourselves that there is only so much that legal recognition can do. Loving our own, patronizing our own, and bearing our own with our head held high, whether registered or not, are themselves protections and should be nurtured.

Think about it—the entire government considering the competitive advantages of each area, harnessing the small businessmen, and procuring the products they support!

Opportunity is a great motivator. And I have no doubt that taken together—OTOP, the Philippine Innovation Act, the Institutionalization of the DTI's Shared Service Facilities (SSF) – also passed by the Senate during the First Regular Session and also Sponsored by Sen. Angara, and many other government programs, along with the ingenuity of the Filipino, will usher in a new era of production that takes into consideration our awesome natural gifts and biodiversity.

Isang luntiang Pilipinas sa ating lahat!

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR PADILLA

As chairperson of the Committee on Cultural Communities and Muslim Affairs, Senator Padilla associated himself with the sponsorship speech of Senator Angara on Senate Bill No. 2387. He congratulated Senator Angara for recognizing Philippine products and the indigenous peoples (IPs). As the Aetas of Bataan had just graced the Senate by singing the national anthem, he stated that the bill's sponsorship, which promotes products that are geographically indigenous to various regions of the country, was timely. He stated that the measure would not only promote the products, but also protect and highlight the heritage and identity of IPs.

COAUTHORS

Senator Villanueva manifested that Senate President Zubiri, Senators Gatchalian, Revilla, and Dela Rosa are coauthors of Senate Bill No. 2387.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 2387

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

SPECIAL ORDER

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the transfer of Committee Report No. 99 on Senate Bill No. 2386 from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders.

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 99 ON SENATE BILL NO. 2386

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Second Reading, Senate Bill No. 2386 (Committee Report No. 99), entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING REFORMS IN REAL PROPERTY VALUATION AND ASSESSMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES, REORGANIZING THE BUREAU OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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

The Chair recognized Senator Gatchalian for the sponsorship.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR GATCHALIAN

In sponsoring Senate Bill No. 2386, Senator Gatchalian delivered the following speech:

I rise today to sponsor a landmark piece of legislation with the potential to revolutionize our nation's real estate landscape—the Real Property Valuation and Assessment Reform, or RPVAR Act. Today, we have a remarkable opportunity before us not only to modernize our processes but also to reaffirm our commitment to progress, efficiency, and fairness in property valuation.

Establishing a standard valuation will foster equity as it will facilitate property rights enforcement, resulting in wealth generation by converting and mobilizing lands and other real property units into economic productive use. In the Philippines, our real estate and land able wealth generation is only at 30.7 percent — lower than the average of major economies in Southeast Asia with 35%. This gap, when converted into stark financial terms, is substantial, amounting to a wealth gap of a staggering \$161 billion, equivalent to an impressive P9.01 trillion using the current exchange rate. It is important to note that a P9 trillion worth of real estate and land wealth gap or dead capital is needed to become productive assets.

Furthermore, the Gross Value-Added Contribution of Real Estate and Ownership of Dwelling in 2022 stands at an impressive P1.25 trillion—equivalent to 5.7 percent of our GDP, as per Philippine Statistics Authority. From an economic perspective, the multiplier effect of real estate investment is compelling. With every peso invested or spent in real estate, the economy yields an output of P1.79, according to the 2018 Input Output Tables from the PSA.

By these figures, it is clear that by adopting a better valuation system, we can work towards ensuring that more people benefit from our land and properties, thus promoting development and boosting wealth for our nation.

However, as we delve into its intricacies, we are confronted with the constraints of an outdated and inefficient valuation system, which hinders the realization of the full potential of our most treasured land resources. It is incumbent upon us to address these limitations and unlock the true value of our properties—fostering a stronger, more prosperous future for all.

Kaya naman napapanahon nang maisulong natin ang repormang magbibigay-daan sa atin upang mas mapadali at mas mapabilis ang pagtukoy sa tunay na halaga ng ating mga lupa sa pamamagitan ng modernong teknolohiya. Higit sa lahat, kinakailangan natin ng repormang nakaayon sa internationally-accepted valuation standards upang matiyak natin na tama at patas ang pagsuri sa halaga ng ating mga lupa at iba pang ari-arian.

Under Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, the responsibility of efficiently administering real property taxes lies with our local governments. However, the current valuation system has resulted in challenges in real property valuation.



One of the main challenges we face is the lack of uniform evaluation across various government agencies. Each agency adopts its own systems and methodologies for property valuation, leading to confusion and inefficiencies. In fact, there are 23 government agencies performing their own valuation for various purposes, such as the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bureau of Local Government Finance, Department of Public Works and Highways, and Local Government Units, among others. This fragmented system not only complicates the process but also inhibits our ability to establish a consistent and equitable standard.

A critical consequence of this disjointed approach is the existence of an outdated Schedule of Market Values or SMVs. *Ito ay isang dokumento na ginagamit sa valuation ng mga ari-arian at lupa sa Pilipinas. Ang mga lokal na pamahalaan ang gumagawa at naglalabas ng SMVs upang malaman ang makatwirang halaga ng mga ari-arian sa kanilang nasasakupan.*

Shockingly, more than 60% of cities and provinces lack updated SMVs. Among the 81 provinces, a mere 41 provinces have managed to update their SMVs, resulting in a concerning 51% compliance rate for provinces. On the city level, the situation is equally worrisome, with only 49 out of the 147 cities having updated SMVs— representing a compliance rate of merely 33%, or only one-third of all cities. Drawing on the latest data, as per the Fiscal Risks Statement of FY 2020, the estimated revenue loss endured by local government units due to the non-updating of SMVs is around P11.6 billion. Meanwhile, the foregone revenue if the reform is not implemented ranges from P18.81 billion to P37.96 billion, based on the preliminary analysis of the Bureau of Local Government Finance. *Isipin na lang ho natin kung ilang paaralan at ospital ang maaaring maitayo natin sa halagang ito para sa ating mga lokal na pamahalaan.*

Furthermore, the absence of a comprehensive and up-to-date electronic database further exacerbates the problem. Citizens are left uninformed about property valuation due to the lack of accessible information. *Kaya naman isang malaking katanungan para sa ating property owners kung paano nila mabebenta sa tamang presyo ang kanilang ari-arian kung hindi naman nila alam ang naaayon na halaga nito. Tila ba ipinagkakait sa kanila na matamo ang makatarungang halaga ng pinaghirapan nilang mga ari-arian sa merkado kapag ito ay kanilang ibinenta. Bukod dito, ipinagkakait din sa kanila ang pagkakataon na mapalago ang kanilang mga ari-arian at maging ang oportunidad na kaakibat nito.*

With these pressing issues, there is no doubt that adopting a uniform standard on property assessments is an indispensable component of establishing an effective and efficient real property tax administration in every local government unit. This vital step is essential to ensure a just and equitable real property tax that accurately reflects the value of our properties.

Given this context, I stand today to sponsor Senate Bill No. 2386, known as the Real Property Valuation Assessment Reform Act, which aims to promote the development and maintenance of a just, equitable, impartial, and nationally-consistent real property valuation based on internationally-accepted valuation standards, concepts, principles, and practices.

This reform goes beyond reshaping bureaucratic structures. It is about illuminating the profound impact of digitalization in reshaping our real property valuation assessment. Allow me to share some of the key objectives that will make this vision a reality.

The heart of this reform lies in the digitalization effort through the development of the Real Property Information System with the goal of ensuring the proper and effective implementation of this Act. By maintaining an up-to-date electronic database of real property transactions and declarations, we empower our nation with greater transparency and efficiency. We acknowledge that real reform will not be achieved if not implemented by all LGUs. Thus, the Department of Information and Communications Technology is mandated to provide the necessary equipment, connectivity, and training for a seamless transition to this modernized system. Through this, we strive to bridge the gap and ensure that even the most underprivileged communities benefit from the advantages of technology.

Moreover, this bill highlights the proposed change in the methodology of valuation. We envision a unified system—doing away with outdated zonal values and replacing them with uniform valuation standards. All appraisers and assessors in local government units and other relevant agencies will adopt these standards, leading to a more equitable and accurate valuation process for lands, buildings, machinery, and other real properties. Conforming to internationally-

accepted principles, this system will ensure that the value of every property is assessed fairly and uniformly—reflecting its true worth and importance to its owners.

One of the vital aspects of this reform is the establishment of the Central and Regional Consultative Committees. These committees will include representatives from various sectors, allowing for meaningful and inclusive dialogues on real property valuation matters. The Central Consultative Committee will focus on adopting internationally-accepted valuation standards, ensuring that our methods align with global best practices. Simultaneously, the Regional Consultative Committee will facilitate discussions on local property market developments, addressing concerns from taxpayers, civil society, and other stakeholders. By engaging all parties, we can create a more robust and responsive valuation system.

Further, this proposed measure aims to create the Real Property Valuation Service within the Bureau of Local Government Finance, or BLGF. This service will serve as the backbone of our new valuation system, with dedicated personnel both in the BLGF and its regional offices. By evaluating and approving the organizational structure and staffing pattern through the Department of Budget and Management, we ensure that this system will uphold the highest standards of professionalism and civil service.

The Real Property Valuation Assessment Reform Act represents a transformative initiative—one that seeks to enhance transparency, fairness, and efficiency in our property valuation processes. *Tinitiyak din nito na walang lokal na pamahalaan ang mapag-iwanaan: pantay-pantay na makikinabang, pareho-parehong aangat tungo sa kaunlaran.*

The RPVAR promotes the fiscal autonomy of local government units to provide basic services to their constituency by enhancing their capacity to generate local revenues from real property. The adjustment of SMVs will not lead to an increase in tax obligations. It is important to remember that local government units possess the absolute authority to carefully manage and mitigate any potential tax increase or decrease by flexibly adjusting the tax rate and assessment level—aligning them with their specific budget goals and priorities. *Ang panukalang batas na ito ay hindi magpapataw ng mga bagong buwis. Ang pagpapataw at paggalaw ng buwis ay mananatiling nasa kamay at pagpapasya ng mga lokal na pamahalaan.*

At this juncture, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the authors of this measure—Senate President Juan Miguel “Migz” Zubiri, Majority Leader Sen. Joel Villanueva, Sen. Pia Cayetano, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, and Sen. Ramon “Bong” Revilla Jr.—for their contributions in drafting this significant piece of legislation. Further, let me also acknowledge the active participation of numerous public and private stakeholders following two public hearings and four technical working group meetings of the Committee on Ways and Means. As the chairman of the Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their invaluable contributions.

From the public sector: Department of Finance, Bureau of Local Government Finance, Bureau of Internal Revenue, National Economic and Development Authority, National Tax and Research Center, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, National Privacy Commission, Department of Information and Communications Technology, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Public-Private Partnership Center, Land Bank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines, Central Board of Assessment Appeals, Assessor’s Office of the City of Valenzuela, Batangas Provincial Assessor, League of Cities of the Philippines, Philippine Councilors League, Provincial Board Members of the Philippines, League of Municipalities of the Philippines, League of Provinces of the Philippines, Provincial and City Treasurers’ Association of the Philippines, PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority, and Senate Tax Study and Research Office.

From the private sector: Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines; Philippine Association of Local Treasurers and Assessors; Philippine Association of Assessing Officers, Incorporated; Chamber of Real Estate and Builders’ Associations; Action for Economic Reforms; Organization of Social and Economic Housing Developers of the Philippines; Tax Management Association; SM Investment Association; Institute of Philippine Real Estate Appraisers; and Real Estate Brokers Association of the Philippines, Inc.

The RPVAR Act stands as a beacon of progress, showcasing the transformative power of digitalization in revolutionizing our real property valuation assessment system. Through this

measure, we not only pave the way for greater efficiency and accuracy in property valuation but also extend a helping hand to low-income LGUs, ensuring that they, too, can reap the benefits of technological investment. The passage of the Real Property Valuation Assessment Reform Act is not merely a legislative milestone; it is a powerful testament to our commitment to the local government units and the Filipino people.

Let us seize this moment and make a real difference in the lives of those we have the privilege to serve.

COAUTHOR

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, Senator Padilla was made coauthor of Senate Bill No. 2386.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 2386

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

SPECIAL ORDERS

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the transfer of the following from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders:

1. Committee Report No. 72 on House Bill No. 606;
2. Committee Report No. 73 on House Bill No. 6688;
3. Committee Report No. 74 on House Bill No. 6694; and
4. Committee Report No. 75 on House Bill No. 7126.

LOCAL BILLS

With the unanimous consent of the Body, upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the following House bills were considered, on Second Reading, one after the other:

1. House Bill No. 606 (Committee Report No. 72), entitled
AN ACT RENAMING THE BOHOL ISLAND CIRCUMFERENTIAL ROAD, WHICH COMMENCES IN BARANGAY POBLACION III TOWARDS THE NORTH OF THE CITY OF TAGBILARAN, AND RETURNS TO BARANGAY POBLACION III FROM THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE CITY OF TAGBILARAN IN THE PROVINCE OF BOHOL, AS THE PRESIDENT CARLOS P. GARCIA CIRCUMFERENTIAL ROAD;
2. House Bill No. 6688 (Committee Report No. 73), entitled
AN ACT RENAMING THE URDANETA CITY BYPASS ROAD, TRAVERSING BARANGAYS NANCAYASAN, SANTO DOMINGO, SANTA LUCIA, CAMANTILES, AND ANONAS IN THE CITY OF URDANETA, PROVINCE OF PANGASINAN, TO AMBASSADOR EDUARDO "DANDING" M. COJUANGCO JR. AVENUE;
3. House Bill No. 6694 (Committee Report No. 74), entitled
AN ACT RENAMING THE TAMBACAN BRIDGE TRAVERSING THE ILIGAN RIVER LOCATED IN BARANGAY TAMBACAN, CITY OF ILIGAN IN THE NORTHERN MINDANAO REGION, AS THE MARIANO LLUCH BADELLES SR. BRIDGE; and
4. House Bill No. 7126 (Committee Report No. 75), entitled
AN ACT NAMING THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY, STRETCHING FROM BARANGAY SAN JUAN BAUTISTA, TRAVERSING THROUGH BARANGAYS TAGONGTONG, ABUCAYAN,

HIWACLOY, DIGDIGON, BALAYNAN AND PAYATAN IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF GOA, BARANGAYS LUPI, TIERRA NEVADA, BINALAY, CAMAGONG, SALVACION, SAN ROQUE, SAN RAMON, SAGRADA, LA MEDALLA, MAGSAYSAY AND SAN VICENTE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TINAMBAC, UP TO BARANGAY NALAYAHAN IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SIRUMA, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR, AS SPEAKER ARNULFO "NOLI" FUENTEBELLA HIGHWAY.

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the *Rules of the Senate*, with the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Villanueva, only the titles of the bills were read without prejudice to the insertion of their full texts into the *Record of the Senate*.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Revilla for the sponsorship.

INQUIRY OF SENATOR PIMENTEL

Senator Pimentel inquired as to whether Senator Revilla would deliver one sponsorship speech encompassing four House bills on the same topic of renaming highways and roads. Senate President Zubiri replied in the affirmative, stating that it has been done in the past, even during the Seventeenth Congress when he was the Majority Leader. He added that the *Rules* allow the tackling of hundreds of bills of the same nature, such as the renaming of roads and conversion of highways in order to streamline the procedure.

Regarding the period allotted for interpellations, amendments, and the approval of the bills on Second and Third Readings, he stated that each measure would be tackled separately.

OMNIBUS SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR REVILLA

With the permission of the Body, Senator Revilla delivered an omnibus sponsorship speech covering the House bills renaming roads, a bridge, and a highway.

Following is the full text of Senator Revilla's sponsorship speech:

I rise today to sponsor several bills on road renaming. These are:

1. House Bill No. 606 under Committee Report No. 72, or the renaming of Bohol Island Circumferential Road as President Carlos P. Garcia Circumferential Road;
2. House Bill No. 6688, taking into consideration Senate Bill Nos. 1111 and 1151, under Committee Report No. 73, or the renaming of Urdaneta City bypass road as Ambassador Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, Jr. Avenue;
3. House Bill No. 6694 under Committee Report No. 74, or the renaming of Tambacan Bridge in the City of Iligan as the Mariano Lluch Badelles, Sr. Bridge; and
4. House Bill No. 7126 under Committee Report No. 75, or the renaming of the National Highway stretching from Barangay San Juan Bautista to Barangay Nalayahan in the Municipality of Siruma, all in the Province of Camarines Sur, as Speaker Arnulfo "Noli" Fuentebella Highway.

What more can we give our community heroes than to immortalize their legacies? This is the primary goal of these road renaming bills. We seek to honor those who were once with us and contributed immensely in our efforts toward nation-building.

President Carlos P. Garcia hailed from Talibon, Bohol. He was our eighth President and was very well known for his "Filipino First" policy.

Ambassador Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. was recognized for his invaluable contributions to our national, political, and economic development.

Atty. Mariano Lluch Badelles Sr. was a former Mayor of Iligan City and Representative of the then 1st district of Lanao Del Norte in Iligan City. He greatly contributed to the progress of their city.

Speaker Arnulfo “Noli” Fuentebella had four decades of various roles in his prolific public service. He was known as a statesman and an experienced legislator.

Your Committee on Public Works has conducted a public hearing on these proposals and has the honor to present to this Chamber said committee reports with the utmost request for your favorable consideration.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE BILL NOS. 606, 6688, 6694, AND 7126

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

SPECIAL ORDERS

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the transfer of the following from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders:

1. Committee Report No. 77 on House Bill No. 1028;
2. Committee Report No. 78 on House Bill No. 1029;
3. Committee Report No. 79 on House Bill No. 1030; and
4. Committee Report No. 80 on House Bill No. 1031.

ROAD CONVERSION BILLS

With the unanimous consent of the Body, upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the following House bills were considered, on Second Reading, one after the other:

1. House Bill No. 1028 (Committee Report No. 77), entitled
AN ACT CONVERTING THE SAWANG-MACALAS ROAD IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROMBLON, PROVINCE OF ROMBLON, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;
2. House Bill No. 1029 (Committee Report No. 78), entitled
AN ACT CONVERTING THE ROAD STRETCHING FROM BARANGAY TUGUIS, MUNICIPALITY OF ODIONGAN TO BARANGAY TUGDAN, MUNICIPALITY OF ALCANTARA, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF ROMBLON, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;
3. House Bill No. 1030 (Committee Report No. 79), entitled
AN ACT CONVERTING THE ROAD STRETCHING FROM SITIO BOLIGANAY, BARANGAY PANIQUE, MUNICIPALITY OF ODIONGAN TO SITIO KABALIWAN, BARANGAY BACHAWAN, MUNICIPALITY OF SAN AGUSTIN, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF ROMBLON, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR; and
4. House Bill No. 1031 (Committee Report No. 80), entitled
AN ACT CONVERTING THE SABLAYAN-AGPANABAT-BAGACAY ROAD, A SECTION OF THE ROMBLON CIRCUMFERENTIAL ROAD, INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the *Rules of the Senate*, with the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Villanueva, only the titles of the bills were read without prejudice to the insertion of their full texts into the *Record of the Senate*.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Revilla for the sponsorship.

OMNIBUS SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR REVILLA

With the permission of the Body, Senator Revilla delivered an omnibus sponsorship speech covering House bills converting local roads to national roads.

Following is the full text of Senator Revilla's sponsorship speech:

I rise today to sponsor several bills on road conversion proposed by our colleagues in the House of Representatives, with counterpart bills here in the Senate. These are:

1. House Bill No. 1028, under Committee Report No. 77, or the conversion of the Sawang-Macalas Road in the Municipality of Romblon, Province of Romblon into a national road and appropriating funds therefor;
2. House Bill No. 1029, under Committee Report No. 78, or the conversion of the road stretching from Barangay Tuguis, Municipality of Odiongan to Barangay Tugdan, Municipality of Alcantara, all in the Province of Romblon, into a national road and appropriating funds therefor;
3. House Bill No. 1030, in consideration of Senate Bill No. 1943, under Committee Report No. 79, or the conversion of the road stretching from Sitio Bolinao Boliganay, Barangay Panique, Municipality of Odiongan to Sition Kabaliwan, Barangay Bachawan, Municipality of San Agustin, all in the Province of Romblon, into a national road and appropriating funds therefor; and
4. House Bill No. 1031, in consideration of Senate Bill No. 1952, under Committee Report No. 80, or the conversion of the Sablayan-Agpanabat-Bagacay Road, a section of the Romblon Circumferential Road into a national road and appropriating funds therefor.

The aim of these road conversion bills is mainly to assist our local governments in providing the needs of their constituents. In converting these roads, the Local Government Units (LGUs) are unburdened of the responsibility of maintaining these highly useful and valuable roads so that they can focus their resources more on the needs of their local government, while entrusting to the national government the preservation of these roads, which is their expertise. We are hitting two birds with one stone, so to speak.

Your Committee on Public Works has conducted a public hearing on these proposals and has the honor to present to this Chamber said committee reports with the utmost request for your favorable consideration.

**SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION
OF HOUSE BILL NOS. 1028, 1029, 1030, AND 1031**

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

SPECIAL ORDERS

Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Body approved the transfer of the following from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders:

1. Committee Report No. 81 on House Bill No. 1043;
2. Committee Report No. 82 on House Bill No. 7234;
3. Committee Report No. 83 on House Bill No. 7508; and
4. Committee Report No. 84 on House Bill No. 7577;

DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICES BILLS

With the unanimous consent of the Body, upon motion of Senator Villanueva, the following House bills were considered, on Second Reading, one after the other:

1. House Bill No. 1043 (Committee Report No. 81), entitled
AN ACT CREATING A DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICE IN THE FIRST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF NEGROS OCCIDENTAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;
2. House Bill No. 7234 (Committee Report No. 82), entitled
AN ACT RE-NUMBERING THE CEBU FIRST, SECOND, THIRD AND FOURTH DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICES TO CONFORM AND CORRESPOND, RESPECTIVELY WITH THE NUMBERING OF THE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS IN THE PROVINCE OF CEBU THEREBY REPEALING REPUBLIC ACTS NUMBERED 9043 AND 9218;
3. House Bill No. 7508 (Committee Report No. 83), entitled
AN ACT CREATING A DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICE IN THE SECOND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN LEYTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR; and
4. House Bill No. 7577 (Committee Report No. 84), entitled
AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICE IN ZAMBOANGA CITY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the *Rules of the Senate*, with the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Villanueva, only the titles of the bills were read without prejudice to the insertion of their full texts into the *Record of the Senate*.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Revilla for the sponsorship.

OMNIBUS SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR REVILLA

With the permission of the Body, Senator Revilla delivered an omnibus sponsorship speech covering House bills creating district engineering offices.

Following is the full text of Senator Revilla's sponsorship speech:

I rise today, to sponsor several bills on district engineering offices proposed by our colleagues in the House of Representatives. These are:

1. House Bill No. 1043 under Committee Report No. 81, or the creation of a District Engineering Office (DEO) in the First Legislative District of the Province of Negros Occidental;
2. House Bill No. 7234 under Committee Report No. 82, or the re-numbering the Cebu First, Second, Third and Fourth District Engineering Offices to conform and correspond respectively with the numbering of the legislative districts in the Province of Cebu;
3. House Bill No. 7508 under Committee Report No. 83, or the creation of a DEO in the Second Legislative District of the Province of Southern Leyte; and
4. House Bill No. 7577 under Committee Report No. 84, or the creation of a separate DEO in the Second Legislative District of Zamboanga City.

In creating these district engineering offices, we are likewise empowering our LGUs so that they would be able to address exigencies of infrastructure in their respective localities. *Inaalalayan natin sila habang tinatahak nila ang bawat hakbang tungo sa paghahatid ng pangangailangan sa kanilang mga nasasakupan.* This will make services accessible to the localities. *Ito ang magiging tulay nila upang matamasa ang kanilang mga adhikain at pangarap na maaari lamang maisakatuparan sa pamamagitan ng mga makabuluhang proyektong pang-imprastruktura.*

Your Committee on Public Works has conducted a public hearing on these proposals and has the honor to present to this Chamber said committee reports with the utmost request for your favorable consideration. Our *kababayans* in Negros Occidental, Cebu, Southern Leyte, and Zamboanga City will greatly benefit from these proposals.



**SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION
OF HOUSE BILL NOS. 1043, 7234, 7508, AND 7577**

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

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

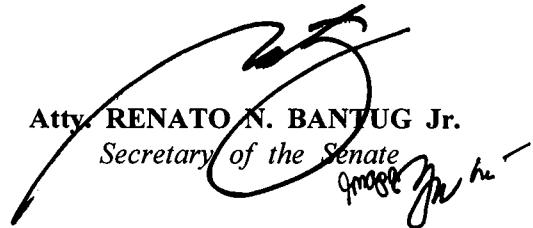
Upon motion of Senator Villanueva, there being no objection, the Chair declared the session adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, August 8, 2023.

It was 8:14 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.

Approved on August 8, 2023

Atty. RENATO N. BANTUG Jr.
Secretary of the Senate

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Renato N. Bantug Jr.", is written over the typed name and title of the Secretary of the Senate.