



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

S e n a t e

Pasay City

Journal

SESSION NO. 12

Wednesday, August 22, 2007

**FOURTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

SESSION NO. 12
Wednesday, August 22, 2007

CALL TO ORDER

At 4:04 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Manny Villar, called the session to order.

PRAYER

Sen. Gregorio B. Honasan led the following prayer based on a Franciscan prayer:

Almighty God, Lord of abundance,
Prince of Peace.

Be present in our midst and make us
conscious agents of Your grace.

As lawmakers of the land, may we take
counsel of Your rebuke of the Pharisees
that the law is made for man and not man
made for the law.

May we be blessed with the awareness
that the law should serve no less than the
ends of justice and righteousness.

May we be blessed with His comfort
at easy answers, half-truths and superficial
relationships so that we may live deep
within Your heart.

May we be blessed with anger at
injustice, oppression and exploitation of our
people so that we may craft laws for
prosperity, justice, freedom and peace.

May we be blessed with tears to shed
for those who suffer from pain, rejection,
starvation, and war so that we may reach
out our hand to comfort them and turn their
pain into joy.

And, finally, may we be blessed with
enough foolishness to believe that we can
make a difference in this world and do what
others claim cannot be done.

Amen.

ROLL CALL

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary of the Senate, Emma Lirio-Reyes, called the roll, to which the following senators responded:

Angara, E. J.	Gordon, R. J.
Aquino III, B. S. C.	Honasan, G. B.
Arroyo, J. P.	Lacson, P. M.
Cayetano, A. P. C. S.	Lapid, M. L. M.
Cayetano, C. P. S.	Legarda, L.
Defensor Santiago, M.	Pangilinan, F. N.
Ejercito Estrada, J.	Pimentel Jr., A. Q.
Enrile, J. P.	Revilla Jr., R. B.
Escudero, F. J. G.	Villar, M.

With 18 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senators Biazon and Madrigal arrived after the roll call.

Senators Roxas and Zubiri were on official mission abroad.

Senator Trillanes was unable to attend the session.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

At this juncture, Senate President Pro Tempore Estrada acknowledged the presence in the gallery of the families of the fourteen (14) members of the Philippine Marines who perished in Basilan last July 10, 2007, namely: M/Sgt. Noel Bautista; T/Sgt. Bernard Abes; S/Sgt. Rey Callueng; S/Sgt. Gerardo Licup; S/Sgt. Cayetano Simbajon; Sgt. Russel Panaga; Cpl. Freddie Palma; Cpl. Elizar Semeniano; Cpl. Reuben Doronio Jr.; Cpl. Jhonard Alianza; Cpl. Arjorin Eleazar; Cpl. Emmanuel Beup; Cpl. Emilio Lachica; and Cpl. Wilfredo Lamban.

Handwritten initials

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, the session was suspended.

It was 4:09 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:10 p.m., the session was resumed.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 5

Preparatory to the presentation of the copy of Senate Resolution No. 5 adopted on July 25, 2007, to the families of the fourteen (14) slain marines, the Secretary of the Senate read the title of the resolution, to wit:

RESOLUTION HONORING THE FOURTEEN (14) MARINES WHO PERISHED IN THE LINE OF DUTY IN ALBARKA, BASILAN LAST 10 JULY 2007, CONDEMNING UNDER THE STRONGEST TERMS POSSIBLE THE BARBARIC ACT OF BEHEADING AND/OR MUTILATING THE REMAINS OF TEN (10) OF THEM, AND URGING THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT AND THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MILF TO IDENTIFY AND PUNISH THE PERPETRATORS.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, the session was suspended to allow Senate President Villar to present a copy of Senate Resolution No. 5 to the representatives of the families of the slain marines.

It was 4:11 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:15 p.m., the session was resumed.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the Journal of Session No. 11 and considered it approved.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Letter of Her Excellency, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, dated 17 August 2007, resubmitting to the Senate the following agreements for concurrence:

1. Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA);
2. ASEAN Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters;
3. ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response;
4. ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution;
5. Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity;
6. RP-Spain Extradition Treaty;
7. Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its First Protocol;
8. Treaty between the Philippines and Spain on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters;
9. Treaty between the Republic of the Philippines and the Republic of Korea on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters;
10. Convention on the Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic;
11. Agreement Establishing the Advisory Centre on WTO Law;
12. Headquarters Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the International Rice Research Institute;
13. Protocol Additional to the Agreement between the Philippines and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the Application

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of Standards in Connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;

14. RP-Japan Agreement on Technical Cooperation;
15. Protocol Amending the RP-Japan Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income;
16. Agreement between the Republic of the Philippines and the United Arab Emirates for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and on Capital;
17. Protocol Amending the RP-New Zealand Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income; and
18. Amendments to the Agreement Establishing the Asian Reinsurance Corporation.

To the Committee on Foreign Relations

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Letter from the Secretary General of the House of Representatives, transmitting to the Senate a copy of Resolution No. 1, entitled

RESOLUTION INFORMING THE SENATE THAT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HAS BEEN ORGANIZED AND HAS ENTERED UPON THE EXERCISE OF ITS FUNCTIONS,

which was adopted on 23 July 2007 by the House of Representatives.

To the Archives

Letter from the Secretary General of the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that on 23 July 2007, the House of Representatives adopted House Concurrent Resolution No. 4, entitled

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO HOLD A JOINT SESSION TO HEAR THE MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Archives

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 551, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE OPEN LEARNING AND DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 552, entitled


AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 386, ALSO KNOWN AS THE CIVIL CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, ARTICLE 867

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committee on Youth, Women and Family Relations

Senate Bill No. 553, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUMMARY TITLING OF REAL PROPERTIES USED AS SITES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada 



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

Senate Bill No. 554, entitled

AN ACT ELEVATING THE PHILIPPINE NORMAL UNIVERSITY TO BECOME THE COUNTRY'S NATIONAL UNIVERSITY FOR TEACHER EDUCATION, ESTABLISHING A SYSTEM OF NATIONAL TEACHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 555, entitled

AN ACT AUTHORIZING BARANGAYS TO ENTER INTO OFFICIAL CONTRACTS WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS TO UNDERTAKE THE DELIVERY OF BASIC SERVICES FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT TO BARANGAY RESIDENTS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committee on Local Government

Senate Bill No. 556, entitled

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

RATING PROHIBITED ACTS AND TRANSACTIONS, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 557, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 386, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE CIVIL CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, ARTICLE 2180

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture

Senate Bill No. 558, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AND ESTABLISHING THE CODE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE PRACTICE OF POLITICAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 559, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING PRIVACY PROTECTION FOR MOTOR VEHICLE OWNERS

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

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Senate Bill No. 560, entitled

AN ACT TO ENFORCE THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO THE FREE EXERCISE OF RELIGION BY STUDENTS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 561, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL IN THE DISPOSITION OF REAL PROPERTIES SITUATED ABROAD

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on Foreign Relations; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 562, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 209, ALSO KNOWN AS THE FAMILY CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, ARTICLE 73

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 563, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING ARTICLE 287 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, BY REQUIRING EMPLOYERS TO RELEASE THE RETIREMENT PAY OF EMPLOYEES WITHIN FIFTEEN DAYS FROM SUBMISSION OF COMPLETE DOCUMENTARY REQUIREMENTS

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 564, entitled

AN ACT PENALIZING THE ACT OF MONEYLENDING WITH INTEREST BY SALARY-DISBURSING OFFICERS IN PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ENTITIES, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 565, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING ARTICLES 155 AND 157 OF EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 209, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE FAMILY CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, STRENGTHENING THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAW GOVERNING THE FAMILY HOME

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; Local Government; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 566, entitled

AN ACT TO DECLARE THE UNIVERSITY BELT AREA IN MANILA AND ALL OTHER SCHOOL SITES OR CAMPUSES IN THE COUNTRY WHETHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE AS DRUG-FREE AND CHILD PROTECTION ZONES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito
Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 567, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING RESEARCH ON
DYSTONIA

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito
Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 568, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 24, 31,
34, 35 AND 110 OF THE NATIONAL
INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF
1997, AS AMENDED, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito
Estrada

To the Committee on Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 569, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 63 OF
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975 OTHER-
WISE KNOWN AS THE "DEPART-
MENT OF THE INTERIOR AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1990"
BY PROVIDING FOR THE ESTAB-
LISHMENT OF AN INTEGRATED
JAIL FACILITY IN METROPOLITAN
MANILA AND IN OTHER HIGHLY
URBANIZED CENTERS IN THE
COUNTRY, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito
Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 570, entitled

AN ACT ABOLISHING THE OVERSEAS
WORKERS WELFARE ADMINIS-
TRATION OR OWWA

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito
Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 571, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING THE TEACHING
OF DISASTER AWARENESS AND
DISASTER MITIGATION AS PART
OF THE CURRICULUM OF ALL
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY
SCHOOLS, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito
Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 572, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING CHILD PORNO-
GRAPHY, IMPOSING PENALTIES
FOR THE COMMISSION THEREOF
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito
Estrada

**To the Committees on Public Information
and Mass Media; and Justice and Human Rights**

Senate Bill No. 573, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A NATIONAL
STUDENT LOAN BOARD TO
IMPLEMENT A NATIONAL STUDENT
LOAN PROGRAM FOR THE POOR,
DEFINING ITS IMPLEMENTING
GUIDELINES, RULES AND REGU-
LATIONS AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR

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Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 574, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE COMPULSORY REGISTRATION OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on Public Works; and Public Services

Senate Bill No. 575, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE IMPROVEMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF THE NATIONAL HISTORICAL INSTITUTE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 576, entitled

AN ACT TO ENSURE PUBLIC ACCESS TO OFFICIAL INFORMATION AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 577, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING THE PAYMENT OF FILING FEES FOR COMPLAINTS CHARGING VIOLATIONS OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 22, AS AMENDED, FILED WITH THE PROSECUTION OFFICES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 578, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING THAT THE SCHEDULE OF FAIR MARKET VALUES OF REAL PROPERTY SHALL BE PREPARED BY THE LOCAL ASSESSMENT COUNCIL AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on Local Government; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 579, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING ARTICLE 123 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, BY REQUIRING THE REGIONAL BOARD TO ISSUE A WAGE ORDER EVERY YEAR OR AN EXPLANATION FOR NOT ISSUING SUCH WAGE ORDER

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 580, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE INSPECTION FUNCTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6727, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE WAGE RATIONALIZATION ACT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 581, entitled

AN ACT ABOLISHING THE NATIONAL CONCILIATION AND MEDIATION BOARD OR NCMB

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 582, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE ACADEMY (PAFA) AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on National Defense and Security; Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 583, entitled

AN ACT DEFINING AND PENALIZING CRIMES AGAINST INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW, ADOPTING CORRESPONDING PRINCIPLES OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY, OPERATIONALIZING UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION, DESIGNATING SPECIAL COURTS, AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Foreign Relations

Senate Bill No. 584, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING REFORMS IN LAND ADMINISTRATION

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on Environment and Natural Resources; Civil Service and Government Reorganization; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 585, entitled

AN ACT ABOLISHING THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OR TESDA

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; and Civil Service and Government Reorganization

Senate Bill No. 586, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING A BAN ON DUMPING OF SEWAGE SLUDGE AND INDUSTRIAL WASTE INTO THE SEA

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Senate Bill No. 587, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE POLITICAL PARTY SYSTEM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 588, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING AND ENHANCING THE DEVELOPMENT, UTILIZATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES *JK*

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Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 589, entitled

AN ACT FURTHER AMENDING PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 198, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PROVINCIAL WATER UTILITIES ACT, AS AMENDED, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 590, entitled

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE SECRETARIES OF HEALTH AND LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT TO ISSUE REGULATIONS TO ELIMINATE OR MINIMIZE THE SIGNIFICANT RISK OF NEEDLESTICK INJURY TO HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 591, entitled

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

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture

Senate Bill No. 592, entitled

AN ACT TO IMPROVE PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 593, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING AND REGULATING THE OPERATION OF CABLE TELEVISION IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

Senate Bill No. 594, entitled

AN ACT TO PROFESSIONALIZE HOSPITAL EMERGENCY SERVICES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committee on Health and Demography

Senate Bill No. 595, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING ALL BRANCHES, SUBDIVISIONS, INSTRUMENTALITIES, AND AGENCIES OF THE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT-OWNED OR CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS OR THEIR SUBSIDIARIES TO DIVULGE THE IDENTITY OF HIRED FOREIGN CONSULTANTS, THE NATURE OF THEIR WORK AND THEIR COMPENSATION, PERKS, AND OTHER PRIVILEGES, AND PROVIDING

PENALTIES IN CASE OF VIOLATION THEREOF

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on Civil Service and Government Reorganization; and Government Corporations and Public Enterprises

Senate Bill No. 596, entitled

AN ACT REDUCING THE TAX INSURANCE PREMIUM UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE SECTION 123 OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committee on Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 597, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A TASK FORCE ON COMMUNICATIONS TO REVIEW AND ASSESS THE STATE OF THE PHILIPPINE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM AND RECOMMEND POLICY, INSTITUTIONAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL MEASURES TO ENSURE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SECTOR AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on Public Services; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 598, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO UNDERTAKE RENTAL RESIDENTIAL HOUSING AT RATES AFFORDABLE TO LOW AND MIDDLE-INCOME FAMILIES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 599, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE BENEFITS OF BARANGAY OFFICIALS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 393 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991, CREATING A NATIONAL BARANGAY BENEFITS AUGMENTATION FUND, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

To the Committees on Local Government; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 600, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING ARTICLES 116 AND 164 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7394 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE CONSUMER ACT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

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

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 74, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS TO INQUIRE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE LEGALITY OF REVENUE REGULATION NO. 9-2007 ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE UPON RECOMMENDATION OF THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE ON 04 JULY *He*

2007 WITH THE END IN VIEW OF
ENACTING LEGISLATIVE MEASURES
TO ADDRESS THE SAME

Introduced by Senator Escudero

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

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 75, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND
DEMOGRAPHY TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION,
INTO THE ALLEGED FAILURE
AND INEFFECTIVENESS IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC
ACT NO. 7305, OTHERWISE KNOWN
AS THE MAGNA CARTA OF
PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS, WITH
THE END IN VIEW OF ENACTING
LEGISLATIVE MEASURES TO
ADDRESS THE SAME

Introduced by Senator Escudero

**To the Committees on Health and Demo-
graphy; and Civil Service and Government
Reorganization**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 76, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELA-
TIONS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE
ALLEGED RAPE OF FILIPINA
OVERSEAS CONTRACT WORKERS
SUCH AS "MELISSA," TO PREVENT
SUCH CASES IN THE FUTURE

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor
Santiago

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

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 77, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COM-
MITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID
OF LEGISLATION, TO DETERMINE
WHETHER THE PRESENCE OF
AMERICAN TROOPS IN INDANAN,
SULU CONSTITUTES UNLAWFUL
COMBAT OPERATIONS

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor
Santiago

**To the Committees on Foreign Relations;
and National Defense and Security**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 78, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE PROPER
SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT
AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGIS-
LATION, ON THE CONTINUING
PREVALENCE OF FLOODS IN
METRO MANILA ALLEGEDLY
CAUSED BY GARBAGE THAT
CLOGS DRAINAGE SYSTEMS, TO
DETERMINE THE LIABILITY OF
THE PUBLIC OFFICIALS INVOLVED,
AND TO REFER THEM TO THE
OMBUDSMAN FOR CRIMINAL
PROSECUTION AND POSSIBLE
SUSPENSION AND EVENTUAL
REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor
Santiago

**To the Committees on Local Government;
and Accountability of Public Officers and
Investigations**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 79, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE
PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE
TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON
THE DECLINING COMPARATIVE
ADVANTAGE OF THE PHILIP-
PINES IN ATTRACTING FOREIGN
INVESTMENTS

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor
Santiago

To the Committee on Economic Affairs

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Proposed Senate Resolution No. 80, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PREVENTION OF ENDEMIC CAR SMUGGLING IN FREE PORTS BY:

- ◆ AMENDING FREE PORT CHARTERS TO PLACE THEM UNDER CUSTOMS JURISDICTION WITH RESPECT TO FOREIGN CARS;
- ◆ LEGISLATING STANDARDS FOR TRANSPARENCY IN SETTING FLOOR PRICES AT AUCTION OF SMUGGLED CARS, TO PREVENT SMUGGLERS FROM BUYING THE CARS; AND
- ◆ EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE PERENNIAL PROBLEM OF CAR SMUGGLING CANNOT BE SOLVED BY ESTABLISHING AN EXTRANEIOUS TASK FORCE, BUT BY LIMITING THE PRESENT DISCRETION ENJOYED BY CUSTOMS, TASK FORCE, AND FREE PORT OFFICIALS TO PICK AND CHOOSE THE SMUGGLING CASES THAT THEY WILL EXPOSE, WHILE TURNING A BLIND EYE TO OTHER SMUGGLING CASES PROTECTED BY VERY HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

To the Committee on Ways and Means

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 81, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEES ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY; AND PUBLIC ORDER AND ILLEGAL DRUGS TO INQUIRE, LOOK INTO AND INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE GOVERNMENT'S NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY AS WELL AS

THE PEACE AND ORDER SITUATION IN MINDANAO AMID THE CONTINUING HOSTILITIES BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY AND THE ABU SAYYAF RENEGADES IN THE PROVINCE OF BASILAN, WHERE A CONTINUING WAR MIGHT SPREAD THE TENSION NOT ONLY IN THE WHOLE REGION OF MINDANAO BUT WORSE IN THE ENTIRE ARCHIPELAGO

Introduced by Senator Honasan

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

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 82, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE RP SKATERS WHO WON IN THE SKATE ASIA 2007

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 83, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE BRAVERY AND DEDICATION OF THE FALLEN OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS IN THE BASILAN BATTLE

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

To the Committee on Rules

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE OF SENATOR GORDON

Rising to a question of personal and collective privilege, Senator Gordon reacted to the decision of the Body to constitute itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the issues raised by Senator Lacson in his privilege speech in the previous day's session.

Not comfortable with the decision, he said that he had requested his colleagues and his staff to look into the provisions of the Anti-Wiretapping Law as he feared that an investigation into the wiretapping

controversy could put the Senate in an embarrassing position that might even lead to its abolition.

Citing the pertinent provisions of Republic Act No. 4200, Senator Gordon asserted that the Senators were made party to an act when they were made to watch an audio-visual presentation of an illegal wiretap, thereby placing the Senate in a precarious and embarrassing situation.

He believed that by delving into the wiretapping controversy, the Committee of the Whole might be transgressing into the powers of the court to which the matter should have been brought and violating the constitutional principle of separation of powers.

Noting that the Human Security Act has been criticized because of the concern that allowing wiretapping under certain circumstances might violate human rights, Senator Gordon cautioned that in the process of the investigation, the Senators would be made to hear wiretaps that were made without a written order of the court. He warned that the Senators could become a party to an illegal act based on the second paragraph of Section 1 of R.A. No. 4200 which provides: "It shall also be unlawful for any person, be he a participant or not in the act or acts penalized in the next preceding sentence, to knowingly possess any tape record, wire record, disc record, or any other such record, or copies thereof, of any communication or spoken word secured either before or after the effective date of this Act in the manner prohibited by this law; or to replay the same for any other person or persons; or to communicate the contents thereof, either verbally or in writing, or to furnish transcriptions thereof, whether complete or partial, to any other person x x x"

Even as he admitted that the rights of certain persons on both sides of the political fence have been violated, Senator Gordon contended that the Senate cannot and should not perpetuate another illegal act by violating the law. Lest they be charged in court with a punishable crime, he advised his colleagues to tarry a little, citing Section 4 of R.A. No. 4200 which provides: "Any communication or spoken word, or the existence, contents, substance, purport, effect, or meaning of the same or any part thereof, or any information therein contained obtained or secured by any person in violation of the preceding sections of this Act shall not be admissible in evidence in any judicial, quasi-judicial, legislative or administrative hearing or investigation."

Senator Gordon expressed concern that if all the Senators took part in such an act, they could all be found guilty and this might lead to the abolition of the institution. He admitted that some of his fellow Senators might still proceed with the investigation notwithstanding possible violations of the law and the Constitution, but he urged his colleagues not to be seasonal but consistent in observing the law.

Senator Gordon cautioned the Senators to be very careful before proceeding with the investigation as he reminded them that the penalty for violation of the law is imprisonment for not less than six months but not more than six years and, in case of a public official, the accessory penalty of perpetual absolute disqualification from public office.

As the more senior, more mature legislators, Senator Gordon expressed the belief that the Senators should fully understand the law. He underscored that the Senate has always stood firmly on constitutional ground when, as an institution, it protected itself from the intrusions of the Executive department and when, individually, four Senators voted against the Trillanes resolution, believing that the Legislature cannot intrude into the Judiciary.

Senator Gordon pointed out that the wiretapping issue should not be investigated by any committee, much less the Committee of the Whole, as doing so might put the Senators who participate in it in peril of perpetual disqualification from public office. He said that for as long as the law has not been amended, it must prevail.

Finally, Senator Gordon stated that he did not want the Senate to be perceived as violating the law, and he wanted to ensure that the rights of all parties are respected in any investigation. He averred that the legislators enacted RA 4200 with the thought in mind that the privacy of communication should be protected. He urged that Body to settle all issues before proceeding further.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR ENRILE

Preliminarily, Senator Enrile stated that under Section 3 of the Anti-Wiretapping Law, the court can grant permission to wiretap or intercept communication when the predicate crime is specified.

To the observation that the audio-visual presentation did not indicate that the reason for the

wiretapping was a predicate crime mentioned in RA 4200 or the Human Security Act, Senator Gordon replied that he never heard any mention or hint of a predicate crime.

Senator Enrile pointed out that paragraph 1 of Section 1 of RA 4200 defines the direct participants in the crime, while the second paragraph deals with people who did not participate directly in the crime but nonetheless knowingly possessed wiretapped materials. In itself, he said, mere possession is proscribed and so is replaying or transmitting them. Further, he stated that Section 2 also imposes the penalty of imprisonment, even perpetual disqualification from public office, on public servants who violate the law. He reminded the Senators that as public servants, they took an oath to enforce and be faithful to the laws of the land, therefore, the act of simply aiding, permitting or causing to be done any of the unlawful acts mentioned in RA 4200 would expose the Senators to a punitive action of imprisonment and even perpetual disqualification from public office.

To the observation that the legislators are also prohibited from receiving illegally wiretapped materials as evidence in a legislative proceeding, Senator Gordon agreed as he maintained that the law is very clear that no one is spared from the penalties.

In closing, Senator Enrile emphasized that the legislators cannot be ignorant of the law that they, themselves, crafted.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR AQUINO

To Senator Aquino's contention that the presentation did not contain any of the conversations purportedly coming from the "Hello Garci" tape but rather a conversation between Mr. Doble and a certain lawyer, Senator Gordon disagreed as he pointed out that he heard a taped conversation being played and which, to him, would classify as illegally obtained evidence because there was no court order presented.

Senator Aquino observed that in his speech, Senator Lacson spoke of the "Hello Garci" issue in general and the activities of the MIG 21 in detail. Senator Gordon reminded the Body that the presentation mentioned certain people like Mike Defensor whose conversations were wiretapped. He stressed that what was shown were the fruits of an illegal wiretap.

Citing a jurisprudence that states, "In the absence of any wire inserted into a closed circuit for purposes of monitoring a conversation, the Anti-Wiretapping Act does not apply," Senator Aquino queried if the law needs to be amended and might no longer be applicable at this time given the new technologies that have emerged in the past years. Senator Gordon agreed that the law can be amended at any time, but he disagreed that it may no longer be applicable, saying that it provides for devices "otherwise described" that may be used for wiretapping in the future.

Senator Aquino asked how the penal provision of RA 4200 correlates to Section 11, Article VI on the Constitution on parliamentary immunity. Senator Gordon replied that Senators are immune from arrest only while the Senate is in session.

Adverting to Section 11, Article VI of the Constitution, Senator Aquino believed that the question of whether RA 4200 envisions a limitation on the Senate's capability to investigate the matter is still debatable. However, Senator Gordon cited Section 4 of the Anti-Wiretapping Law which does not make a distinction in the kind of information considered inadmissible as evidence.

Asked how the Senate should handle the issue, Senator Gordon replied that the Body should follow the law rather than justify an illegality with another illegality. He suggested that Senator Aquino offer a way to allow the Senate to come up with revisions to the law.

Senator Aquino pointed out that there is a legal concept which states that the testimony arising from a person which causes a declaration against self-interest has an increased value on the weight of evidence. Therefore, he believed that rather completely ignoring the situation, the Senate ought to determine the veracity of the assertions made by Mr. Doble and find out the reason behind his involvement, as well as the technology involved in the surveillance operation, so as to craft amendments to the law while ensuring that the constitutional provision on the privacy of communication is protected.

Senator Gordon clarified that he only wanted to make sure that the Senate is following the proper procedure and to protect the Body from involving itself in an undertaking that would only merit criminal sanctions and from embarrassment. Therefore, he

said that the obvious solution would be to bring the matter to the court. He maintained that he did not know how the Senate could go about its investigation without violating public trust.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR ESCUDERO

At the outset, Senator Escudero believed that it is still uncertain whether the Senate would violate RA 4200 if it conducts an investigation into the matter as the Members do not know whether Senator Lacson would push through with the playing of the "Garci tapes" during the hearing. He posited that the thrust of Senator Lacson's speech and inquiry might be solely concentrated on the illegal wiretapping committed by certain ISAFP officials. Senator Gordon replied that while this is possible, the Senate might also allow illegal evidence to be presented which would violate Section 4 of RA 4200.

Senator Escudero disclosed that there is a House bill seeking the inclusion of the tapping of cellular phones within the purview of RA 4200 because there was doubt whether cellular technology is one the "devices" mentioned in said law. For his part, Senator Gordon expressed concern that the Senate has already been exposed to the kind of illegal evidence that should not be presented as envisioned by the law. However, he pointed out that the Anti-Wiretapping Law was not crafted by people without foresight as he cited Section 1 which anticipates the use of other possible technologies.

Asked what rights are supposed to be protected by the Anti-Wiretapping Law, Senator Gordon replied that it covers individual rights such as the right to privacy of communication.

To the observation that in this particular case, no one has admitted to being one of the voices allegedly recorded in the "Garci tapes," hence, no one could claim that his right to privacy has been violated, Senator Gordon said that the fact that certain individuals have admitted to having tapped into the conversations of certain individuals shows that an illegal act had been committed. He explained that while the purpose behind a wiretap is to expose an individual, the Constitution provides for standards upon which a person could be investigated.

Asked whose rights are being violated, Senator Gordon said that an illegal wiretap violates everyone's rights.

Senator Escudero noted that as Executive Secretary Bunye had claimed that the "Garci tapes" were manufactured, then no right to privacy had been violated because no court has decided with finality that these were wiretapped materials. He also stated that even some Members do not find Mr. Doble's statements to be credible.

To the suggestion that the matter be investigated if only to find out whether or not the Senate is treading on dangerous waters, Senator Gordon clarified that he was not trying to stop any investigation; rather, he was trying to prevent an illegality from being perpetuated. He explained that it would become a continuing offense if the tapes are passed on and heard by the Senate, thereby making the Members party to the offense. Moreover, he said that since Mr. Doble and others have admitted to hearing the conversation, they could be held liable.

Senator Escudero said that when the same arguments were raised during the House hearings on the "Garci tapes," he cited a similar case in the United States, *Bartnicki et al. v. Vopper, aka Williams, et al*, which involved an illegal conversation between a public official and a lobbyist with respect to a graft case. He bared that in this specific case, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that when the right to privacy and the right of the people to information on matters of public interest are weighed against each other, the right to privacy must give in, and so it ruled that the tape could be played. He said that the U.S. Supreme Court also made a ruling in another case pertaining to illegally tapped conversations related to a contract that the U.S. House of Representatives allowed to be played in open hearing. This, he said, underscored the point that there are legal arguments to support the contention that the tape could be played for as long as national interest is involved and there is a need to know its contents.

Moreover, Senator Escudero stated that as the conversations in the "Garci tapes" pertained to alleged cheating attempts in the last elections which clearly involve matters of public interest, it is but proper to give the concerned parties the opportunity to respond and clear their names.

For his part, Senator Gordon clarified that the issue at hand is that the Members would be tolerating an illegality since RA 4200 clearly states that such matters cannot be heard in a legislative investigation.

He also posited that if such illegal evidence is presented to the Senate as a Committee of the Whole, this would preclude the Members from acting as judge on any impeachment proceeding that might emanate thereafter. He pointed out that the investigation ought to be undertaken by the House of Representatives as the Senate, pursuant to its mandate, would eventually have to sit in judgement of the impeachment case.

Senator Escudero expressed apprehension that using that argument might embolden any person investigated by the Senate to present evidence that tends to implicate an impeachable officer and claim that the Senate is treading on dangerous grounds as it might later on sit in judgment of that officer.

Senator Gordon stated that precisely, it is improper for the Senate to investigate the case because of the Anti-Wiretapping Law, adding that he did not want to be caught in a crunch between the Legislative and the Judiciary. He stressed the need to be circumspect and careful about the matter. He underscored that an investigation into an impeachable offense should really proceed from the House.

Senator Escudero insisted that the matter does not involve an impeachment case. He opined that the Senate, in the exercise of its oversight function, could inquire into the case and look into the implementation of RA 4200 to determine whether law-enforcement officers, particularly the ISAFP, did conduct illegal wiretapping operations, in which case, it is the duty of the Senate to study how the law could be amended to avoid similar situations.

Senator Gordon expressed support for Senator Escudero's proposition to amend the law. But for as long as the law exists, he believed that it should be followed, otherwise, the Senate would be put in a very precarious situation. He observed that the Senate is not yet finished organizing the committees but constituted itself into a Committee of the Whole to conduct a major investigation.

REMARKS OF SENATOR ARROYO

Preliminarily, Senator Arroyo adverted to Section 3 of the Bill of Rights which states, "The privacy of communication and correspondence shall be inviolable except upon lawful order of

the court or when public safety or order requires otherwise as prescribed by law." He emphasized that the inviolability of the privacy of communication and correspondence, therefore, could only be violated by order of the court or when the law prescribes it.

He noted that the Anti-Wiretapping Law, authored by the late Sen. Lorenzo Tañada, provides, among others, that any evidence obtained in violation of the preceding sections of this Act shall not be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding. He stated that the constitutional provision has been bolstered by RA 4200, and all it amounts to is that under no condition can anyone – be it Congress or the Executive – tinker with the people's privacy, unless it is allowed by the courts.

Judging from the discussions, Senator Arroyo contended that the Body is faced with a situation as to how the matter should be looked into. He stated that in this case, there is no court order allowing the wiretap and what is at issue is that a sergeant wiretapped a conversation using an ISAFP equipment, and the evidence is now being used in a congressional proceeding. But he insisted that there is a constitutional prohibition against using the wiretap in any proceeding and for any purpose.

Citing a precedent, he recalled that in May 2003, when the taped conversation between Fraport lawyers and government officials was sent to the Senate and referred to the Blue Ribbon Committee, the latter did not proceed with an investigation because of the constitutional prohibition and RA 4200. Further, he recounted that when that matter was elevated to plenary, there was no motion to direct the Committee to proceed with the investigation.

Further, Senator Arroyo noted that under the Human Security Act, the permission to wiretap could be obtained only from the Court of Appeals. He said that unless RA 4200 is repealed, amended or modified, nothing can be done about the prohibition on wiretapping. He said that Members who are lawyers should not allow themselves to be accused of ignorance of the law. In fact, he pointed out, there is a debate between the Republican and the Democrat legislators in the U.S. Congress on whether to relax the prohibition on wiretapping. He said that the exception under the Constitution and the law is that one has to go to court and this is the limitation on the powers of Congress and the Executive. *AK*

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As regards Section 7 of the Bill of Rights which states, "The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law," Senator Arroyo asserted that the right of people to information is subject to such limitations as may be provided by law, in this case RA 4200.

To the suggestion of Senator Arroyo that the speech be referred to the Committee on Rules so that this could be studied more thoroughly, Senator Gordon agreed.

REMARKS OF SENATOR PANGILINAN

At this point, Senator Pangilinan called the attention of the Body to Section 3 (Jurisdictional Challenge) of the Rules of Procedure Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation which states that, "If the jurisdiction of the Committee is challenged on any ground, the said issue must first be resolved by the Committee before proceeding with the inquiry." He pointed out that Senator Gordon's speech has raised the issue of whether or not the Committee of the Whole has jurisdiction over the issues raised in Senator Lacson's speech in view of a possible violation of the Anti-Wiretapping Law.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, the session was suspended.

It was 5:48 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:52 p.m., the session was resumed.

Senator Pangilinan stated that after conferring with Senators Arroyo, Gordon and Pimentel, it was agreed that Senator Gordon's speech would be referred to the Committee on Rules.

Senator Escudero said that he has no objection to the agreement, but he opined that Section 8 (Preliminary Determination) of the Rules of Procedure Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation, which provides that the President shall convene an executive

meeting within five (5) days after the referral of the matter, might be more applicable. Senator Pangilinan said that he would not like to preempt the Committee on Rules but this could very well be a finding of the Committee.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, the session was suspended.

It was 5:53 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:54 p.m., the session was resumed.

REMARKS OF SENATOR PIMENTEL

Senator Pimentel stated that there was no doubt in his mind that the persons in the taped conversations are President Arroyo and former Comelec Commissioner Garcillano. He said that the taped conversations that Senator Lacson would like to expose before the Committee of the Whole would not be covered by the Anti-Wiretapping Law because it involves a matter of public interest. He added that whatever rights to be protected are no longer there because President Arroyo had admitted that it was her voice in the taped conversations, and Mr. Garcillano has not taken any step to sue those who were accusing him of being the other party to the conversation. He said if there is anyone who should be haled to court, it should be Secretary Bunye because he was the one who broached it first and told media that he has two versions of the taped conversation.

Further, he expressed doubt that a law passed by any legislature can modify a right granted by the Constitution. He said that Senator Gordon's speech should indeed be referred to the Committee on Rules and if, necessary, the Members should vote on the matter after all the legal angles have been studied thoroughly.

Senator Gordon underscored that the rights of society should be protected from illegal searches and expeditions, pointing out that the privacy of communication under Section 3, Article III of the Constitution is a very primordial right. He said that it would be proper for the concerned individuals to go to the Court of Appeals.

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REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Chair referred Senator Gordon's question of privilege and the interpellations thereon to the Committee on Rules.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR GORDON

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

LET'S CHANGE OUR PARADIGM IN BASILAN AND SULU

I beg the privilege of addressing the Chamber tonight on an issue of great importance to the nation. I refer to the situation in Basilan and Sulu where our Armed Forces, for many months now, have been engaged in a campaign against terrorist bands and where, in recent weeks, the nation has known the anguish of losing several scores of its soldiery.

Last July 10, we mourned in this Chamber the loss of 14 of our soldiers who fell victim in an ambush.

Last August 7 and 9, we were both in sorrow and shock when 26 of our men fell in an encounter with the enemy.

And just last Saturday, we received the sad news that 15 of our soldiers had fallen in another encounter. Five of the fallen were young officers who had received their commissions only last year, following their graduation from the Philippine Military Academy.

These losses strike us all to the heart, but we are not surprised why these soldiers fell in the line of fire. For they were truly the ones manning the front lines in the nation's war against terrorism, they who all these months had been striving valiantly to bring peace and stability to Basilan and Sulu.

It is to ensure that their sacrifice will not be in vain that I speak tonight about the situation in Basilan and Sulu.

As the Chamber is aware, I took a leave of absence last week to visit Basilan and Sulu as the head of a mission for the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) and as a member of the Senate. I will forthwith submit a formal report on my visit, detailing all that I observed and heard there and the various conclusions that I reached. For the present, allow me to offer the Chamber a quick perspective on the situation in the two islands, and certain conclusions that I have

reached for the improvement of national policy toward the region.

Our Red Cross mission was to assess and augment our relief efforts there in light of the recent fighting. We were joined by Mr. Albert Santoli of the Asia-America Initiative, which is providing aid to peace and progress in Mindanao. During our stay, we also met the local officials, commanders and civic leaders so as to gain a clear perspective on the situation.

From all that we saw and heard first-hand during the visit, we were of the unanimous opinion that the situation in the two islands can considerably be improved if peacekeeping efforts are matched by vigorous action to enhance basic governance – such as the projection of government authority and the provision of basic and social services.

No war zone

The first and most striking thing we noticed during our visit was how different the picture of Basilan and Sulu is when you are there walking in its streets and visiting its schools, hospitals and public places. Despite the recent hostilities in Basilan and Sulu and the many casualties sustained, neither province is a war zone, contrary to the popular impression.

The peace and order situation is under control. The "no guns policy" is being enforced effectively and it is supported by the local people. Gen. Romeo Tolentino and his other generals have been doing a great job in making sure that guns are not in the possession of civilians. The military is doing an excellent job in making sure that no guns are allowed in the hands of civilians walking around the towns and cities of Sulu and Basilan.

The number of displaced persons is not as large as feared and they are being assisted by PNRC and other groups. Normal business and social life prevails.

This is not to minimize the seriousness of the terrorist threat and the high toll of lives of recent incidents there. But the fighting has occurred mainly in the forested areas, a few pockets of the two islands where the campaign against terrorists bands, particularly, the Abu Sayyaf, is being prosecuted.

The local people, while edgy about the recent fighting and the military presence, are happy about the gun ban. Sulu Gov. Abdul Sakurtan told me that he will continue the ban beyond the current situation. He has successfully made all mayors and barangay chairmen

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report to their posts where, in the past, such local officials used to station themselves in Zamboanga City. The mayor of Jolo is fully supporting his initiatives. *Ang tampo niya noong araw, ang mga mayor ay nandoon sa Zamboanga imbes na nasa kanilang munisipyo kaya ang nangyayari, kulang na kulang ang supervision of basic resources and services to the communities that are affected.* But today, Governor Sakurtan, supported by the mayor, is putting command responsibility on the local government officials.

The focus of complaint and worry of the local people is not just peace and order but the poor provision of basic services (such as schools, water services and roads), the payment of salaries to teachers, and support for economic activities and livelihood.

Disturbing education situation

This leads me to my second point: the education situation is disturbing. Many teachers and government employees in Basilan and Sulu are complaining of not having received their salaries for as long as six months and more. They likewise reported that their GSIS premiums totaling over several hundred million pesos had not been remitted to Manila, so they are unable to get loans, health insurance and other benefits that otherwise would have helped to tide them over. They face the prospect of a pensionless retirement if the situation is not corrected. I believe the GSIS must be told to fix its side of the problem once and for all.

As chairman of the Committee on Government Corporations and Public Enterprises, I intend to call hearings on this matter as soon as possible.

Part of the problem also is that many of these teachers and employees have not been properly qualified for government service. They need documentation by the Professional Regulations Commission. Perhaps the quickest way to remedy these problems is for PRC to go to Basilan and Sulu and administer examinations and documentation right there.

I am happy to note that I submitted a letter to the President of the Philippines telling her of these events and I understand, in the National Security Council meeting yesterday, she sent the officials of the Professional Regulations Commission to conduct examinations in Sulu, Basilan and other areas, in addition to instructing the GSIS to make sure that the complaints that we voiced in behalf of the teachers are immediately addressed.

Likewise, notwithstanding the fiscal autonomy of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), it is still subject to audit by the Commission on Audit (COA). Failure to do so will empower the President or the Secretary of Finance to reduce, suspend, or cancel the release of funds intended for ARMM to the extent of the amounts that are unaccounted for.

I understand that these amounts go back to the time of Chairman Misuari and, therefore, it behooves the Commission on Audit to immediately conduct such investigation so that the Executive could properly take the necessary actions on this matter.

Nonetheless, we cannot do with the sorry situation where our teachers' pay is delayed and where their premiums are not remitted. If at all, the GSIS should keep the laws and then go after the ARMM.

On the bright side, we witnessed some cheering scenes in the schools we visited. In one school, we joined Tausug grade school students in singing the national anthem and reciting the oath of allegiance to the Republic. In another school, we saw grade school students gather and listen to a debate among students running for election to their student council. *Noteworthy also is the fact that in these schools, the teachers and students go to school in uniform.*

We also saw the Asian-American Initiative in action in the schools. It is providing computers, books, livelihood programs and even Filipino flags to the schools. It would be good for us to realize that it is embarrassing that the Department of Education does not provide flags that it has to take an Asian-American Initiative to provide flags in a very touching, very poignant scene where the grade school kids sing the national anthem and the ARMM anthem and take their oaths before a Philippine flag donated by the foreign community.

It would be good if government can move fast to build and repair more schools in the region and shore up support for the teachers. There is no lack of desire among the teachers, they have the passion and the willingness to educate as exemplified by their continued work despite not receiving their salaries. In Kasambuhan Elementary School in Indanan, Sulu, there were volunteer teachers in nursery school who were not paid at all. Volunteerism was something we saw again and again during our visit.

At this juncture, Senate President Villar relinquished the Chair to Senate President Pro Tempore Ejercito Estrada.

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Health care and volunteerism

The same sense of volunteerism was even more evident with respect to health services in the two provinces. In our visit to the Jolo Integrated Provincial Hospital, we found much to cheer about. Health care services were available. The place was spotless and very orderly. Ancillary services like x-ray were being extended to patients. They had many volunteers in the hospital from the different colleges – volunteer nurses, volunteer adults who were ministering to the patients and changing bed sheets. The pharmacy even has volunteers to make sure that medication is provided for.

In Basilan, health services and livelihood, however, are inadequate. They do not lack of dedicated and caring people there, but they need more support and provisions for their services. Above all, they need a reliable water service. The latter problem is due to water pipes being dug up and vandalized, particularly in Sulu, especially in the schools. Pipes were laid out above ground and when the elections were over, one of the losing mayors, I understand, took out the pipes and sold these in Cebu.

On the part of the Red Cross, we are expanding our presence in the two islands so we can assist even more. Within the month, with the cooperation of the ICRC, we will set up a full-fledged blood bank for both Basilan and Sulu by upgrading the present blood station into a blood collection unit. Sulu has been provided with an ambulance. Yesterday, we shipped by C-130 aircraft a brand-new 4-wheel-drive ambulance to Basilan. We have installed single-side band radio communications in Isabela and Lamitan towns. We continue to send blood products and supplies and medicine to Basilan and Sulu. To date, we have already submitted at least a hundred blood supplies to Sulu and Basilan because of the recent conflict. We have augmented our staff with foreign conflict-trained personnel, Filipinos who were trained in Pakistan during the earthquake there, as well as in other places where there had been conflict, to help manage response, relief and rehabilitation of internally displaced persons and other challenges. We are implementing water projects in both islands and we will put up a health station in Albarka, Basilan, the site of the recent ambush.

Economic situation


To turn next to the economic situation in Basilan and Sulu, I can report that business and commerce go on as usual in both islands. Just as people go on with their normal lives, so the

public market and the trading stores are doing normal business.

We visited the campus of the Jolo Agricultural School, a site that used to be a dumping ground for bodies by the opposing parties in Sulu. It is now being used for poultry raising.

In the towns of Indanan and Patikul, we found high school and college students bottling sardines, mangosteen, durian and other fruit preserves. Everywhere we went, we were being offered bananas, lanzones, mangosteen and other fruits. Seafood was quite abundant. These produce are very cheap in the province. Mangosteen was selling for P5 to P7 per bundle. A bundle is about 14 or 18 fruits of mangosteen. Can you imagine P5 *lamang po, makakabili na kayo ng bundle doon?* And this struck us because we knew that in Metro Manila, mangosteen sells for P100 to P120 per kilo. *Imagine if the Department of Trade and Industry could help the people of Basilan and Sulu in marketing these products at better prices. Why can they not send at the back of a C-130 all these products and connect the farmers of Sulu and Basilan to the markets here in Manila? Why can they not sell it to SM, to Rustan's, to the public markets all over Luzon? Would this not be a tremendous fresh air of support by the people of this country from Luzon and Visayas if they could get these done? This will do much to provide livelihood and jobs to the two communities, and the entire ARMM area.*

One move that could really help the regional economy is for the government to finish the circumferential road in Isabela City in Basilan and other road projects. The natives thereat call it the "abortion highway." Even a four-wheel-drive vehicle cannot traverse that road, especially the other half of Basilan. That is why we put up a four-wheel-drive brand new vehicle there so that it can traverse these routes. General Juancho Sabban, the marine brigade commander in Basilan, told me that the completion of the circumferential road will have far-reaching impact on provincial life and commerce, because people, goods and relief effort, and life-saving emergency vehicles can move more quickly from Isabela to isolated towns, as well as address life-threatening situations in the rural areas. This will pave the way for local prosperity because of the increase in the number of rubber trees and the abundant production of lanzones.

At this juncture, Senate President Pro Tempore Ejercito Estrada relinquished the Chair to Senate President Villar. 



It must be pointed out that about three months ago, I was asked to invest in Basilan because everybody was now beginning to plant rubber trees again. I am sure, if memories are correct, we are all aware of the fact that the Basilan of old was peaceful because people had livelihood thereat. They had rubber, they had fruits, and people were getting jobs in the process.

Another program that the people of Basilan and Sulu would greatly welcome is a move by the government to develop the tourism potential of their provinces.

When I first became tourism secretary, I said: "One day, my dream is to make the Abu Sayyaf, who have turned into peacekeeping ways, to become tour guides in Basilan." It was met with derisive laughter. I still believe that that can be done.

There are small islands there that would be attractive for tourism. Initially, this will serve domestic tourism, but eventually when peace is fully established they can serve foreign tourists as well. To be sure, Malamawi in Basilan is being used by the American servicemen and nothing has happened to them. In fact, fastfood restaurant is now in Isabela.

In other words, we have to really make peace work, test the peace, and this is what I am leading to in the next paragraph.

Signals are very important in tourism and investment promotion. For example, when I was Secretary of Tourism, we never stopped tourism promotion despite the Dos Palmas hostage-taking in Palawan; despite the raid in Malaysia where the hostages were brought to our country; the bombings in Davao City where the Pearl Farm was attacked by the Abu Sayyaf. I brought the Spanish ambassador the next day, and we swam in the Pearl Farm to show that life goes on. I even brought him to walk in the streets of Davao and made him talk to the Davao City Council.

When the Davao City port was bombed, we went there in a full-loaded plane. And we tried to get PAL to allow reduced rates for the domestic travelers so that people would not be afraid of Davao. In fact, that worked. And in Zamboanga City, when an American was assassinated there, we danced with the late Caling Lobregat, and together with Congressman Lobregat, we sang in the public plaza during that event.

Despite the travel advisories, as a result of the Dos Palmas hostage-taking in Palawan, the bombings in Davao, the raid of the Pearl Farm, the

assassination of an American in Zamboanga City, we went to these places immediately in order to maintain the confidence in our country and our tourism industry.

Look at where tourism is now today. We are hitting new records in tourist arrivals. In fact, we must pass the tourism bill so that we can add new hotels, new infrastructure to our tourism profile. This is similar to what Sri Lanka did in the face of rebel attacks that damaged, not only the international airport, but also the planes of Sri Lanka at that time. And I remember we were in a conference at that time and Sri Lanka continued on. And today, Sri Lanka's tourism is alive and well. They did not wait for peace before moving to strengthen and promote their tourism industry. This is exactly what we should be doing now in Basilan and Sulu and the rest of Mindanao, two islands that have attractions all their own, to make sure that we challenge and make the peace work. In other words, we need a change of approach. In Sulu, we could actually develop Panglima Tahil Island across Jolo and I already talked about Malamawi in Basilan.

At this juncture, Senate President Villar relinquished the Chair to Senate President Pro Tempore Ejercito Estrada.

A change of approach

As we surveyed all these different aspects of life in the two islands, we could not help concluding that the campaign against terrorism will yield more lasting results if the military effort is matched by a comprehensive effort to build up the physical, social and legal infrastructure in Basilan and Sulu, and in ARMM, in general.

What I am suggesting here is a change in perspective and approach to the area. The prevailing practice has been to treat Basilan and Sulu and other areas in Mindanao as a war zone, whether one is calling for all-out war like the hardliners or for unrelenting peace talks like the bishops. Mindanao is not a war zone. I have already stated that Jolo and Basilan are not war zones. And I could see that and I even slept in Sulu last Wednesday night to prove that point; we walked at night there as well. This had led to a neglect of the all-important buildup of basic services and infrastructure in the area. *Nag-aalangan ang gobyerno natin, hindi pumapasok ang GSIS, hindi pumapasok iyong mga suweldo ng mga teachers, ayaw tingnan kung ano ang nangyayari because ang sabi natin war zone iyong area. Dapat talaga ini-engage ng gobyerno iyong mga sinasabi nilang lugar* *AK*

na may problema para sa ganoon business is going to thrive, education will continue and the farms will function. But if we treat it as a war zone, talagang walang mangyayari sa mga darating na panahon diyari kundi giyera nang giyera.

Yet, in fact, the situation there is no more difficult than in other areas of the county where there are insurgent or rebel activities. Bohol and Bicol sometimes have had bombings and attacks; Manila for a while had bombings in Roxas Boulevard; we had bombings in EDSA; we had bombings in LRT. Can we imagine what would happen if we said, like the international community, Manila is more and more becoming a war zone? And yet, the facts show that we have stuck to our course and today we now have almost three million tourists at the end of this year. We have already surpassed 2.6 million tourists. Yet, it is still going to be great effort to just try and handle these areas in Sulu and in Basilan because of that bias. There must be a paradigm shift.

In saying this, I am not disagreeing with those who say that the campaign against the terrorist should be continued without letup. That has its obvious merits, especially if there is a chance to cut off the head of the terrorist threat. We cannot blink before the eyes of terrorism. I used to say this when travel advisories were being given to us by the international community and I would say, "You are hypocrites in the international community, you want to blink by issuing travel advisories to our country but in reality you are actually giving a ground to the terrorists by doing precisely what they want you to do, and that is reacting to them in the most negative fashion, thus, breaking the rice bowls of many poor people in these developing areas."

Similarly, I support the counsel of those who counsel the pursuit of peace negotiations with the MILF. We all desire a peaceful settlement of this more than 30 years of conflict, of bloodshed in Mindanao and Sulu.

In the course of my visit there, I spoke with the wife of a certain Chairman Kaif of Mindanao and she was complaining that her house was bombed. When I talked with General Tolentino about this, he said that Chairman Kaif is one of the more reasonable ones. And when I got back to Manila the other day, I got a call from the son, Nurdin Saif. He wants me to say this, and I am going to say this because I would not want to make it appear that I merely went there without delivering their message, the usual request that they had in the past. They want the release of

Chairman Misuari. They want to make sure that we go back to Jeddah and talk about allowing the peace agreement to be implemented.

These things I have to mention here to honor their request.

But the pursuit of those initiatives should not be at the expense or suspension of earnest efforts to improve governance, infrastructure and basic services in Basilan and Sulu. The obvious need for capacity-building in many areas of public life there has to be built through the active engagement of our national government, and any sector that can help. For in this way, we can drain local support for extremism and terrorism if the local people can feel and see government truly working in their midst.

For this kind of capacity-building, assistance from the national government is a must. As I reported previously to the Executive after a visit to Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, a bridge donated by the U.S. remains to be built even though the materials for it—valued at several hundred million pesos—were shipped there over seven years ago. This infrastructure will not happen unless there is direct intervention and assistance from the national government. I reported this matter to the President, and I believe the ARMM Governor was called and apparently there was a lack of funding from the ARMM side to make the approach to the bridge. I believe that when we review the budget, we should look into this matter, so that the bridge which links Bongao and the main island of Tawi-Tawi can really service people especially at night when it is dark, when women are trying to give birth and being brought to the hospital and they would have to go by boat, they could drown in the process, thus, it is so important that we try to alleviate the human suffering of our people there.

That situation is replicated many times in Basilan, Sulu and the ARMM. We are all aware that ARMM is one of the most impoverished regions in the country. There is apparent hesitancy about pouring assistance and investments into the area for various reasons: first, because there is a sense that the region is per-petually in conflict; second, because it is the business now of the autonomous government; and third, because of the persistence of the stereotype that our Muslim brothers do not consider themselves as part of the Filipino nation. All these are misimpressions, contrary to the prevailing realities and attitudes in Basilan and Sulu. And sadly I fear that in yielding to them, in letting them hold sway over policy, we have consigned the area to neglect and underdevelopment.

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Can we charge this to our colonial past? When Magellan came all the way from Spain, only to find out that there were Moors – or Moros as they are called here – that used to occupy Spain for 700 years until they were driven out, he was surprised and said: “Oh no, it is the Moors all over again.” And that is why he lost again. In fact, that has become an infection in our country. We have lost our head because the Spanish, perhaps, in their zeal to unite the country, misguided as it was, made it appear that the Moros, our original countrymen, were the enemy. That is why in our May festivals, we would hold *moro-moro* to make it appear that the Moros were the enemies of the Filipino Christians. I submit that the Moros are not our enemy, and I believe that they are entitled to mutual understanding by both groups.

I believe that it is time to change our paradigm in Basilan and Sulu and other parts of the country and apply there the same healing solutions that we are doing in other areas of the country.

I believe it is time to cast the old blinders, which like the *moro-moro*, have turned our Muslim brethren into strangers in national life.

I believe it is time for an expanded policy not only of inclusion, but an affirmative policy of earnest engagement in the development of Basilan, Sulu and ARMM, in general.

Simply stated, consistency, accountability and follow-through leadership in ARMM and government agencies must be committed to peace and progress in the region. Using best-practice as our model, we have to set up the infrastructure for accountability and standards to implement all funding initiatives.

What we face in the South, finally, is a battle for hearts and minds. The conflict cannot be won by force alone. All groups trying to help there – the military, the private sector, civil society and international aid organizations – share this conviction about the situation. Local people have to believe that there really is a peace dividend, and that in getting from here to there, we will be with them all the way.

None of this is to forget the memory of all those who have fallen in the fight against terrorism in Basilan and Sulu. On the contrary, by creating a new day for our brothers and sisters in the region, by winning both peace and progress, we will vindicate and honor their valor and great sacrifice.

It is time for this entire country to invest in the peace, support the Tausogs in Sulu and our brothers in Basilan and make sure that we are part of the change that we want to happen.

SUSPENSION OF THE PRIVILEGE HOUR

In view of the desire of some senators to interpellate Senator Gordon on his speech at a later date, upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Body suspended the privilege hour.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

Upon nomination by Senator Pangilinan, on the part of the Majority, there being no objection, the following senators were elected to the committees hereunder indicated:

Committee on Local Government

Members :

Cayetano (P)	Lapid
Enrile	Revilla
Cayetano (A)	Angara
Escudero	Gordon

Committee on Public Works

Members :

Defensor Santiago	Arroyo
Gordon	Angara
Lapid	Zubiri
Honasan	

Committee on Public Order and Illegal Drugs

Members :

Revilla	Enrile
Gordon	Lapid
Zubiri	

Oversight Committee on Dangerous Drugs

Members :

Revilla	Enrile
Zubiri	Lapid

Committee on Accountability of Public Officers and Investigations

Members :

Defensor Santiago	Cayetano (P)
Enrile	Honasan
Escudero	Zubiri
Gordon	

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Committee on Education, Arts and Culture

Members :

Angara	Gordon
Cayetano (P)	Revilla
Escudero	Zubiri

Oversight Committee on the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program

Members :

Arroyo	Enrile
Revilla	

Committee on Foreign Relations

Member : Arroyo

Committee on Public Services

Vice-Chair : Arroyo

Members :

Honasan	Lapid
Gordon	Zubiri
Angara	

CHANGES IN COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, on the part of the Majority, there being no objection, the following changes in committee memberships were approved by the Body:

Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Senator Revilla in lieu of Senator Arroyo

Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Arroyo in lieu of Senator Cayetano

COAUTHOR

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, Senator Legarda was made coauthor of Senate Bill Nos. 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177 and 178.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, the session was suspended.

It was 6:35 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:35 p.m., the session was resumed.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 71

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 71, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE SAN MIGUEL-PILIPINAS NATIONAL BASKETBALL TEAM FOR THEIR VALIANT EFFORT AND DETERMINATION TO BRING HONOR TO THE COUNTRY THROUGH THEIR LAUDABLE PERFORMANCE IN THE 24TH FIBA ASIA CHAMPIONSHIP FOR MEN.

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.

ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 71

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 71 was adopted by the Body.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 82

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 82, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE RP SKATERS WHO WON IN THE SKATE ASIA 2007.

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.

ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 82

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 82 was adopted by the Body.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 83

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 83, entitled

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RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE
BRAVERY AND DEDICATION OF
THE FALLEN OFFICERS AND
SOLDIERS IN THE BASILAN
BATTLE.

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.

**ADOPTION OF PROPOSED
SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 83**


Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 83 was adopted by the Body.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Chair declared the session adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, August 28, 2007.

It was 6:38 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.


EMMA LIRIO-RIVERA
Secretary of the Senate

Approved on August 28, 2007