

Catalyzing Governance Reform Through Legislation



Feliciano Belmonte Jr.
Speaker



Raul A. Daza
Deputy Speaker



Lorenzo R. Tañada III
Deputy Speaker



Pablo P. Garcia
Deputy Speaker



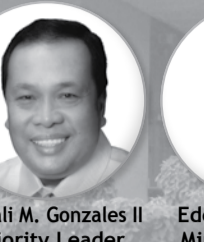
Arnulfo P. Fuentesbella
Deputy Speaker



Jesus Crispin C. Remulla
Deputy Speaker



Maria Isabelle G. Climaco
Deputy Speaker



Neptali M. Gonzales II
Majority Leader



Edcel C. Lagman
Minority Leader

The 15th Congress opened on July 26, 2010 in a social climate of vibrant hope for authentic reform in governance under a new administration.

In the House of Representatives, the people's aspirations for good governance and intense yearning for change found clear expression in the election of Rep. Feliciano Belmonte, Jr. (4th Dist., Quezon City) as Speaker.

Speaker Belmonte, whose career spans outstanding tenures in both the executive and legislative branches of government, is an accomplished public servant who previously served as Speaker of the House in 2001 during the 11th Congress.

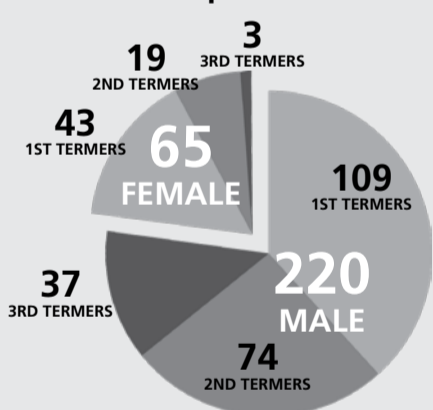
Charting bold directions

In his inaugural speech, Speaker Belmonte declared his resolve to transform the House into a bastion of authentic reform for good governance. He urged Members to conscientiously attend to their legislative duties; to exemplify a strong work ethic, discipline, and integrity; and to pass critical reform legislation.

Absenteeism has become a thing of the past. Session attendance of Members surged to an average of 94.25% of the total membership per session day—a feat unparalleled in the history of the Chamber.

Throughout the First Regular Session, the House also consistently garnered high public approval ratings. In the SWS Survey for the 4th Quarter of 2010, the House achieved a record-breaking +33 approval rating. Speaker Belmonte himself continues to enjoy growing public trust and approval ratings in surveys of leading public opinion polling bodies: +17 (SWS) and +50 (Pulse Asia) through the 1st Quarter of 2011.

Membership of the House of Representatives



No. of Members	285
Male	220
Female	65
No. of Committees	70
Regular	59
Special	11

Crafting the framework of governance reform

In its resolute quest to build the policy foundations for sociopolitical and economic reforms, the House during the First Regular Session acted upon a wide array of legislative measures to expand the arsenal of policy reform initiatives that help steer the country along the path to progress.

The Speaker and the House leadership identified 107 priority measures of which 23 were similarly identified as priorities by the President and endorsed by the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC).

Of the LEDAC priorities, three have been enacted into law: the GOCC Governance Act of 2011 (RA 10149); Rationalizing Nightwork Prohibition on Women (RA 10151); and Resetting the ARMM Elections (RA 10153). In addition, two measures amending the EPIRA were also enacted: the Extension of the Lifeline Rate (RA 10150); and the Extension of the Life of the Joint Power Commission (Joint Resolution 1).

Facilitating people's access to services

Among the earliest accomplishments of the House in the 15th Congress is the prompt passage of the General Appropriations Act of 2011 (RA 10147). The 2011 national budget channels resources to President Aquino's

AN EARLY HARVEST OF LANDMARK REFORM LAWS

In the First Regular Session of the 15th Congress, the House of Representatives processed 1,712 measures. Eight became law while 110 national bills and 146 local bills were approved on Third Reading and transmitted to the Senate. A total of 126 regular resolutions, six concurred resolutions, and 718 resolutions authorizing inquiries in aid of legislation were also adopted. The laws enacted include:

- **RA 10147 - The 2011 General Appropriations Act** contains provisions that secure resources to help the poor send their children to school and access basic needs
- **RA 10149 - The GOCC Governance Act** punishes misuse of funds and mismanagement in government-owned or controlled business enterprises
- **RA 10150 - Extending the Implementation of the Lifeline Act by Amending the EPIRA Law** helps low-income earners cope with their electric bills by granting them an extended ten-year period of discounted rates
- **RA 10151 - Allowing the Employment of Night Workers** repeals the ban against women working at night and provides benefits for night workers
- **RA 10152 - The Mandatory Infants and Children Health Immunization Act** prescribes compulsory and free immunization of infants and children against Hepatitis B, tetanus, diphtheria, mumps, measles, polio, whooping cough and other vaccine-preventable diseases
- **RA 10153 - Synchronization of Elections and Term of Office of the Elective Officials in the ARMM to Coincide with National and Local Elections** puts in place governance measures in ARMM to end abuse of power through private armies and electoral irregularities
- **RA 10154 - Requiring All Government Offices To Ensure The Release Of The Retirement Benefits Of Its Employees Within Fifteen Days From Retirement**
- **Joint Resolution 1 - Granting a 10-year extension for the Joint Congressional Power Commission (JCPC)** ensures the continuous exercise of JCPC's oversight to ensure the full realization of the goals of the EPIRA and the Renewable Energy Act

flagship pro-poor program—the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps), which grants conditional cash transfers to qualified indigent families.

The House approved other bills on Third Reading that empower disadvantaged segments of the population. For students, it approved on Third Reading the bill granting underprivileged college and technical education students discounted tuition, books, food, and other educational necessities (HB 4373). For the informal settlers, HB 4656 penalizes squatting racketeers and professional squatters who displace the urban poor from socialized housing and resettlement programs. For the families of overseas Filipino workers, HB 4539 opens up credit assistance of up to P50,000 to help them cope with daily expenses in the first few months of their breadwinner's absence.



Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. (center, in dark suit) gives the thumbs-up sign alongside fellow Members of the House on June 8, 2011, the culminating day of the First Regular Session.

Major educational reforms underway

Reconfiguring the educational system for competitiveness ranks high in the priorities of the House. The bill that seeks to institutionalize kindergarten education (HB 3826) lays the foundation for the Department of Education's "K-12 Plan" that aims to extend the number of years for basic education from 10 years to 12 years.

Other approved bills reinforce the country's educational system. These include strengthening the ladderized interface between technical-vocational education and training and higher education (HB 4255); establishing a Philippine High School for

(HB 4251); regulating the use of mobile devices while driving (HB 4571); protecting individual personal data in information and communications systems in government and in the private sector (HB 4115); and expanding the prohibited acts of discrimination against women on account of gender (HB 4643).

Accountable, transparent and effective governance

The House upholds the integral participation of diverse social sectors in policy-making. HB 4225 fosters the participation of civil society groups in local, regional, and national development planning. To secure the



Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. (in photo with Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II and Basic Education and Culture Committee Chairman Salvador Escudero III at the Plenary Hall) leads the House in the 15th Congress in taking the steeper path of integrity and honorable service.

Sports (HB 3825); and granting discounts on education-related services to underprivileged students in the post-secondary and tertiary levels (HB 4373).

The House further expanded the network of public schools across the country by establishing nine national high schools, three state universities and colleges (SUCs), and converting 11 public tertiary institutions into SUCs.

Promoting a healthy society

The 2011 national budget (RA 10147) contains provisions that secure resources for public health care, particularly for the construction of more health facilities in rural areas.

Apart from the new law providing for mandatory immunization of infants and children (RA 10152), bills advancing the well-being of children were also approved on Third Reading, including the bill requiring mandatory oral prophylaxis on newborns (HB 4075) to prevent the untimely occurrence of blindness in infants, and HB 3088 which promotes breastfeeding as an essential component of family planning and responsible parenthood.

Upholding people's rights and safety

The House of Representatives passed the Children in Conflict Areas Protection Act (HB 4480) aids children in times of internal displacement triggered by calamity or war. It also approved a bill strengthening foster care for abandoned and neglected children and children with special needs (HB 4481) and another bill providing for a longer period for the rectification of simulated births (HB 3543).

Also passed on Third Reading are HB 4209 which grants free information programs for employees on the rights of workers, and HB 3546, which protects the right of students to enroll in review centers of their choice.

In the arena of public safety, the House approved bills penalizing persons driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs

will of the people and curb fraud, the House approved an electoral reform bill, HB 3469, which requires mandatory use of biometrics in voters registration.

In pursuit of full accountability of public officials, the House performed its constitutional duty and heard the impeachment complaint against the former Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez. The proceedings were marked by strict adherence to the rules of the House on impeachment and the observance of the rule of law.

The House also resolved to widen the network of courts in the country. It passed on Third Reading 24 bills that seek to create a total of 58 court branches across the country—four additional Municipal Trial Courts, 11 Metropolitan Trial Courts, and 43 Regional Trial Courts.

To enhance the capacity of local government units, the Chamber passed on Third Reading the bill that provides for the direct remittance to LGUs of their share in the proceeds derived from the utilization and development of national wealth in their respective jurisdictions (HB 4410). Likewise passed was a proposed measure that strengthens the fiscal autonomy of LGUs by repealing certain sections of RA 10121 (HB 4061).

Under the leadership of Speaker Belmonte, the House of Representatives has swiftly reclaimed its role as vanguard of policy reform by crafting ground-breaking measures and initiatives that bring to every Filipino the blessings of a better quality of life and provide a solid foundation for sustained development and the country's resurgence. •

15th Congress HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Statistical Data on Measures Processed First Regular Session July 26, 2010 - June 08, 2011

I. MEASURES FILED	
No. of Bills Filed	4890
No. of Resolutions Filed	1474
Total No. of Measures Filed	6364
Total No. of Committee Reports	1249
II. MEASURES APPROVED	
Republic Acts	9
National	8
House Joint Resolution	1
Adopted Senate Version	1
National	1
Approved on 3rd Reading	256
National Bills	110
Local Bills	146
Approved on 2nd Reading	107
National Bills	10
Local Bills	97
Adopted Resolutions	858
Measures Consolidated/ Substituted	372
Total Measures Approved	1230
Measures Processed	1602
III. MEASURES IN THE CALENDAR OF BUSINESS	
Total Number of Measures in the Calendar of Business	110
TOTAL MEASURES PROCESSED	1712