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PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 17th CONGRESS, FIRST REGULAR SESSION

House of Representatives

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No. 32

CALL TO ORDER

At 10:00 a.m., Deputy Speaker Mylene J. Garcia-Albano called the session to order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
The session is now called to order.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
Please rise for the singing of the National Anthem.

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
Please remain standing for a minute of silent prayer.

Everybody remained standing for the silent prayer.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
Please take your seats.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we defer the calling of the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move for the deferment of the approval of Journal No. 31.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the deferment is hereby approved.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we now proceed with the Reference of Business,

and that the Secretary General be directed to read the same.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General is directed to read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following House Bills and Resolutions on First Reading, and Communications, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 3810, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE MANDATORY LABELING OF FOOD, FOOD PRODUCTS AND THEIR DERIVATIVES (PROCESSED OR NOT) AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS LIKE RICE, CORN AND VEGETABLES, AMONG OTHERS, CONTAINING GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOs) OR THOSE PRODUCED BY GENETIC ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 3720 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE FOOD, DRUGS AND COSMETICS ACT’ AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7394 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE CONSUMERS ACT OF THE PHILIPPINES’ AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Rodriguez (M.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3811, entitled:

“AN ACT EXTENDING PREFERENCE OF EMPLOYMENT TO ANY ONE CHILD OF VETERANS IN THE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT-OWNED

AND/OR GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE”

By Representative Defensor
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

House Bill No. 3812, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING SELF-REGULATORY POLICY ON GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES’ USE OF COMPUTERS FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN WORK-RELATED TASKS WHILE ON WORK TIME AND PREMISES”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

House Bill No. 3817, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING THE INTERCEPTION AND DISCLOSURE OF ORAL, WIRE, OR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY OF COMMUNICATION AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Defensor
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 3813, entitled:

“AN ACT PENALIZING ALL ADVERTISING AGENCIES THAT EXPLOIT WOMEN AND GLORIFY SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THEIR ADVERTISEMENTS”

By Representative Castelo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

House Bill No. 3818, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE SECURED TRANSACTIONS LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN THE PHILIPPINES, WHICH SHALL PROVIDE FOR THE CREATION, PERFECTION, DETERMINATION OF PRIORITY, ESTABLISHMENT OF A NOTICE REGISTRY, AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTERESTS IN PERSONAL PROPERTY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Bravo (A.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

House Bill No. 3814, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE PROVINCE OF CAMARINES NORTE TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DAET AND MUNICIPALITY OF LABO, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (f) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980’ AS AMENDED AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Panotes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 3819, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A DRUG TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTER IN THE CITY OF BACOR, PROVINCE OF CAVITE, TO BE KNOWN AS THE CITY OF BACOR DRUG TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTER AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS DRUGS

House Bill No. 3815, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING EMPLOYERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO PAY 14TH MONTH PAY”

By Representative Billones
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 3820, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS FREE ADMISSION TO ALL PUBLIC MUSEUMS AND NATIONAL HISTORICAL SHRINES AND LANDMARKS”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3816, entitled:

“AN ACT REALIZING THE CONSTITUTION TAX EXEMPTION GRANTED TO NON-STOCK, NON-PROFIT EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BY AMENDING SECTION 30 OF THE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8424, AS

House Bill No. 3821, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A THREE THOUSAND PESOS (PHP3,000.00) INCREASE IN THE MONTHLY PENSION OF WAR VETERANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
AND WELFARE

House Bill No. 3822, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING TITLE V - BOOK III OF REPUBLIC ACT 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1999, PROPOSING A PERMANENT ITEM FOR A DISASTER OFFICER IN EVERY LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3823, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR TAX EXEMPTIONS AND SUBSIDIES FOR THE LOCAL MUSIC INDUSTRY, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3824, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FREE AND SUITABLE PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3825, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING THE COLLECTION OF FEES FROM PASSENGERS FOR THE USE OF SANITARY FACILITIES IN LAND TRANSPORT TERMINALS, STATIONS, STOPS AND REST AREAS”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 3826, entitled:

“THE MAGNA CARTA FOR DAYCARE WORKERS”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF
CHILDREN

House Bill No. 3827, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING SUFFICIENT INFORMATION OF DRIVERS OF PUBLIC UTILITY VEHICLES AS A REQUIREMENT FOR THE ISSUANCE AND EXTENSION OF FRANCHISES OF COMMON CARRIERS”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 3828, entitled:

“AN ACT TO INTEGRATE A COMPUTER EDUCATION PROGRAM INTO THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3829, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS WORKERS BANK, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND
FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

House Bill No. 3830, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 212 AND 214 OF REPUBLIC ACT 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3831, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING ARTICLE 183 OF ACT NO. 3815, AS AMENDED, DECLARING THE FILING OF FALSE COMPLAINTS AGAINST PUBLIC OFFICERS AS AN AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES OF PERJURY”

By Representative Revilla
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF
LAWS

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 402, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, TO INQUIRE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE MEASURES BEING DONE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO PREVENT

THE POSSIBLE SPREAD OF THE ZIKA VIRUS IN THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Kho
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 403, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, IN THE OPERATIONS OF THE EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANIES (TNCs) (UBER, GRAB AND U-HOP) PARTICULARLY RESPECTING THE LEGALITY OF THEIR EXISTENCE, SAFETY OF TRANSPORTING PASSENGERS, ABUSES COMMITTED BY THEIR ACCREDITED TRANSPORTATION NETWORK VEHICLES SERVICE (TNVS) AND THEIR LIABILITIES AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE ABSENCE OF CONGRESSIONAL FRANCHISE AS A SIGNIFICANT PREREQUISITE FOR THEIR OPERATIONS”

By Representatives Agarao and Leachon
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 404, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EXPRESSING A PROFOUND CONDOLENCES ON THE DEMISE OF COACH VIRGILIO ‘BABY’ A. DALUPAN”

By Representatives Nieto and Maceda
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 405, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING FILMMAKER LAVRENTE ‘LAV’ DIAZ FOR RECEIVING THE GOLDEN LION AWARD IN THE 73RD FILM FESTIVAL”

By Representatives Nieto and Maceda
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

House Resolution No. 406, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONGRATULATING AND SUPPORTING DIRECTOR BRILLANTE MENDOZA FOR BEING SELECTED AS THE OFFICIAL FILIPINO ENTRY FOR THE BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM AT THE 89TH ACADEMY AWARDS FOR HIS FILM ‘MA’ ROSA”

By Representatives Nieto and Maceda
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

House Resolution No. 407, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE ALLEGED ANOMALOUS ACTS AND PRACTICES BEING IMPLEMENTED BY DR. DEXTER BUTED, PRESIDENT OF THE PANGASINAN STATE UNIVERSITY, LINGAYEN CAMPUS”

By Representatives Bataoil and Espino
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 408, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS ALLEGEDLY PERPETRATED BY ELEMENTS OF THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION AND DETECTION GROUP (CIDG)-REGION VII IN CEBU CITY, ON SALUGPONGAN SCHOOL TEACHER AMELIA POND, WHICH INCLUDE ILLEGAL ARREST AND FILING OF TRUMPED UP CHARGES”

By Representatives Brosas, De Jesus, Zarate, Tinio, Castro (F.L.), Casilao and Elago
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated July 27, 2016 of Michael G. Aguinaldo, Chairperson, Commission on Audit, transmitting copies of the 2015 Annual Audit Reports on National Government Agencies:

1. Department of the Interior and Local Government;
2. National Police Commission;
3. Bureau of Jail Management and Penology;
4. Philippine National Police;
5. Philippine Veterans Affairs Office;
6. General Headquarters Armed Forces of the Philippines;
7. Philippine Army;
8. Philippine Navy
9. Philippine Air Force;
10. Bureau of Immigration;
11. Bureau of Corrections;
12. Parole and Probation Administration; and
13. Bureau of Fire Protection.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated July 29, 2016 of Vivien G. Jumao-As, Director IV, Regional Director, Regional Office No. XIII, Commission on Audit, transmitting copies of the Annual Audit Reports (AARs) for CY 2015 on the following water districts:

1. Butuan City Water District, Butuan City;
2. Nasipit Water District, Nasipit, Agusan del Norte;
3. Buenavista Water District, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte;
4. Bayugan Water District, Bayugan City;
5. Bunawan Water District, Bunawan, Agusan del Sur;
6. Prosperidad Water District, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur;
7. San Francisco Water District, San Francisco, Agusan del Sur;
8. Sibagat Water District, Sibagat, Agusan del Sur (2010-2015);
9. Surigao Metropolitan Water District, Surigao City, Surigao del Norte;
10. Bacuag Water District, Bacuag, Surigao del Norte;
11. Del Carmen Water District, Del Carmen, Surigao del Norte;
12. Metro Siargao Water District, Dapa, Surigao del Norte;
13. Placer Water District, Placer, Surigao del Norte;
14. Socorro Water District, Socorro, Surigao del Norte;
15. San Jose (Dinagat Islands) Water District, San Jose, Province of Dinagat Islands;
16. Bislig City Water District, Bislig City, Surigao del Sur;
17. Cantilan Water District, Cantilan, Surigao del Sur;
18. Hinatuan Water District, Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur;
19. Lianga Water District, Lianga, Surigao del Sur;
20. Madrid Water District, Madrid, Surigao del Sur;
21. Tagbina Water District, Tagbina, Surigao del Sur;
22. Tandag Water District, Tandag, Surigao del Sur (2014-2015); and
23. Carmen Water District, Carmen, Surigao del Sur (2010-2015).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated August 5, 2016 of Michael G. Aguinaldo, Chairperson, Commission on Audit, transmitting copies of the CY 2015 Audit Reports and Management Letters on the Government Owned or Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) in the National Capital Region:

A. CY 2015 Annual Audit Reports:

1. AFP Retirement and Separation Benefits System (AFP-RSBS) (2014-2015);
2. APO Production Unit Inc. (APU);
3. Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) (2014-2015);
4. Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA);
5. Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (CEZA);
6. Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM);
7. Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP);
8. Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP);
9. Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) (2014-2015);
10. Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP);
11. DISC Contractors, Builders and General Services, Inc.
12. Duty Free Philippines Corporation (DFP);
13. Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) (2014-2015);
14. GSIS Family Bank (GFB) (2014-2015);
15. Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF) (2014-2015);
16. Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) (2014-2015);
17. Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA);
18. Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) (2014-2015);
19. Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA);
20. Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA);
21. Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA);
22. Metropolitan Waterworks & Sewerage System (MWSS);
23. National Development Company (NDC);
24. National Electrification Administration (NEA);
25. National Food Authority (NFA);
26. National Housing Authority (NHA) (2014-2015);
27. National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation (NHMFC) (2014-2015);
28. National Irrigation Administration (Special Fund-F158));
29. National Power Corporation (NPC);
30. National Tobacco Administration (NTA);
31. National Transmission Corporation (NTC);
32. Natural Resources Development Corporation (NRDC);
33. Nayong Pilipino Foundation (NPF);
34. National Irrigation Administration (Corporate Fund-F501);
35. National Irrigation Administration (General Fund-F101, 102, 161 and 171);
36. Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA);
37. People's Credit and Finance Corporation (PCFC) (2014-2015);

38. Philippine Aerospace Development Corporation (PADC);
39. Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR);
40. Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA);
41. Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC);
42. Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) (2014-2015);
43. Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA);
44. Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA);
45. Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS);
46. Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC);
47. Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC);
48. Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC);
49. Philippine National Railways (PNR);
50. Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA);
51. PNOC-Alternative Fuels Corporation (PNOC-AFC);
52. PNOC-Exploration Corporation (PNOC-EC);
53. PNOC-Development & Management Corporation (PNOC-DMC);
54. PNOC-Malampaya Production Corporation (PNOC-MPC);
55. PNOC-Renewables Corporation (PNOC-RC);
56. PNOC-Shipping & Transport Corporation (PNOC-TC);
57. Philippine Ports Authority (PPA);
58. Philippine Postal Corporation (PPC);
59. Philippine Postal Savings Bank, Inc. (PPSBI) (2014-2015);
60. Philippine Retirement Authority (PRA);
61. PITC Pharma, Inc. (PPI);
62. Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM);
63. Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (QUEDANCOR);
64. Small Business Corporation (SBC);
65. Social Housing Finance Corporation (SBC) (2014-2015);
66. Social Security System (SSS) (2014-2015);
67. Southern Utility Management and Services, Inc. (SUMSI) (2014-2015);
68. Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA);
69. Technology Resource Center (TRC);
70. Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA);
71. Trade and Investment Development Corporation of the Phil. (TIDCORP) (2014-2015); and
72. Veterans Federation of the Philippines (VFP).

B. Management Letters:

1. Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSP);
2. Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO); and
3. Tourism Promotions Board.

T O T H E C O M M I T T E E O N
A P P R O P R I A T I O N S

2015 Annual Report of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation as per letter dated September 9, 2016 of Cristina Que Orbeta, President, Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation.

T O T H E C O M M I T T E E O N
B A N K S A N D
F I N A N C I A L I N T E R M E D I A R I E S

Letter dated September 15, 2016 of Roland A. Rey, Regional Director, Regional Office No. V, Commission on Audit, transmitting copies of the CY 2015 Annual Audit Reports (AARs) on the accounts and operations on the following water districts in Region V:

1. Balatan Water District, Balatan, Camarines Sur;
2. Bato Water District, Bato, Camarines Sur;
3. Calabanga Water District, Calabanga, Camarines Sur;
4. Irosin Water District, Irosin, Sorsogon; and
5. Sorsogon City Water District, Sorsogon City, Sorsogon.

T O T H E C O M M I T T E E O N
A P P R O P R I A T I O N S

Report on Economic and Financial Developments in the Philippines, Second Quarter 2016 per letter dated 15 September 2016 of Amando M. Tetangco Jr., Governor, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

T O T H E C O M M I T T E E O N
B A N K S A N D
F I N A N C I A L I N T E R M E D I A R I E S

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Report on Philippine External Debt as of June 30, 2016.

T O T H E C O M M I T T E E O N
B A N K S A N D
F I N A N C I A L I N T E R M E D I A R I E S

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

S U S P E N S I O N O F S E S S I O N

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
The session is suspended.

It was 10:08 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 10:37 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
The session is resumed.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of our guests in the gallery from the Judiciary, namely:

From the Supreme Court: Acting Chief Justice Presbitero J. Velasco Jr., Justice Diosdado M. Peralta, Justice Jose P. Perez, Deputy Court Administrator Raul B. Villanueva, Justice Adolfo S. Azcuna, Chancellor, Philippine Judicial Academy;

From the Sandiganbayan: Presiding Justice Amparo Cabotaje-Tang, Associate Justice Efren N. Dela Cruz, Associate Justice Alexander G. Gesmundo, Associate Justice Samuel R. Martires, Associate Justice Ma. Theresa Dolores Gomez-Estoesta, Associate Justice Sarah Jane T. Fernandez, Associate Justice Michael Frederick L. Musngi, Associate Justice Geraldine Faith A. Econg, Associate Justice Karl B. Miranda, Associate Justice Zaldy V. Trespeses;

From the Court of Appeals: Presiding Justice Andres B. Reyes Jr., Associate Justice Remedios Salazar-Fernando, Associate Justice Danton Q. Bueser; and

From the Court of Tax Appeals, Presiding Justice Roman G. Del Rosario, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
Welcome to the House of Representatives, to the distinguished members of the Judiciary. (*Applause*)

The Floor Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 3408

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 3408, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General is hereby directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 3408, entitled: AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FROM JANUARY ONETODECEMBER THIRTY-ONE, TWO THOUSAND AND SEVENTEEN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

THE JUDICIARY

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of sponsorship and debate. May we now recognize the Sponsor for the Judiciary, Rep. Raul V. Del Mar from the First District of Cebu City.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
The Honorable Del Mar is recognized.

REP. DEL MAR. Thank you, Mme. Speaker and Mme. Floor Leader.

I have the privilege and the honor to sponsor the budget of the Judiciary and I stand ready now to answer whatever questions our colleagues may have.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. I move that we recognize our House Minority Leader Danilo E. Suarez for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
The Hon. Danilo Suarez, House Minority Leader, is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.
Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to some interpellation?

REP. DEL MAR. Willingly to the distinguished Minority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ. This proposed budget, and he may consult with his principal, was prepared February this year. Am I correct?

REP. DEL MAR. That is correct, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. And ready for submission to the Department of Budget and Management by about the end of May, middle of June?

REP. DEL MAR. Yes, before the end of June in compliance with the deadline. They submitted it before the deadline.

REP. SUAREZ. Then, the DBM, as practiced, presented a ceiling on how much will be given to this very important office?

REP. DEL MAR. There was no ceiling, Mme. Speaker, but they were required to submit their proposed budget for 2017.

REP. SUAREZ. Will this proposed budget for next year be higher than the budget of 2016...

REP. DEL MAR. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. ... than the previous year, 2015?

REP. DEL MAR. Yes, the proposed—and, we will discuss the recommended budget already before us, as approved, as presented by the DBM, in the National Expenditure Program in the amount of P32.541 billion, higher than the 2016 approved budget, which was P26.790 billion. So there was an increase of P5.750 billion, representing a percentage increase of 21.46, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

On another subject, this Representation and the Minority would like to express our appreciation and much-deserved congratulation to this office, the Judiciary, for participating in the deliberations on our issues in The Hague wherein we won in the arbitration. So, congratulations to the joint effort represented by, I think, on the arbitration case, it was Chief Justice Carpio and through a working arrangement with the Department of Foreign Affairs and other agencies. We won the case in The Hague. Am I correct there, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. DEL MAR. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. On those particular procedures, does the office of the Supreme Court allocate funds for such purpose: research, consultants, et cetera?

REP. DEL MAR. They do not, Minority Leader, Mme. Speaker. They do not provide any funds for them.

REP. SUAREZ. Are we going to assume that the expenditures being spent by the prime mover, who has been very much focused—I think it is an obsession of his lifetime—on this particular case use other funds for that purpose?

REP. DEL MAR. Yes, the presence and attendance of Justice Carpio, Mme. Speaker, was entirely in accordance with his strong advocacy for the position of the country, vis-à-vis the court, the issue before the international court of arbitration. Except for his travel expense, everything was at his personal expense.

REP. SUAREZ. Did the Office of the Supreme Court ask whether one of their members might be in need of support because of this very noble endeavor?

REP. DEL MAR. They know of that, Mme. Speaker, but no request was made by Justice Carpio, and so there was nothing to consider. Of course, personally, I would expect—this is just my opinion—that the Supreme Court would have supported him in the necessary expenses that he needed to attend that court deliberation, but he requested for none, and there was nothing to approve, Mme. Speaker. There was no request to approve.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, I would imagine that issues like this wherein you face an international court like this arbitration court—that is in the Netherlands, am I correct? It is in The Hague?

REP. DEL MAR. That is correct, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. You must seek assistance or hire other lawyers, international lawyers who are experts on arbitration, especially on an issue like this, which, I think, is a very specialized field.

REP. DEL MAR. Yes, the office which represented the country in that arbitral court, Mme. Speaker, was the Office of the Solicitor General, and Justice Antonio Carpio was there to lend his much-valued support since he is very well conversant on the issue, and was of immensely valuable help to the Philippine delegation, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, okay, this is a learning curve for me because this will be the first time in my career as a Member of the House to interpellate on the budget of the Supreme Court. So, the Gentleman is saying, distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, that hiring foreign lawyers who are experts in the field of issues like this arbitration is the call of the Solicitor General. Is that correct?

REP. DEL MAR. Yes. To make a clarification, Mme. Speaker, Justice Antonio Carpio was not hired at all. He was there on a voluntary basis to help as much as he can because this has been a long-time advocacy on his part. And so, the case, Mme. Speaker, was that he merely supported and helped our panel appearing before the arbitral court there.

REP. SUAREZ. Nevertheless, that is water under the bridge. That was done by this concentrated effort of the DFA, the OSG—if you are saying that the OSG participated on the personal capacity of one member of the Supreme Court. Tayo po nanalo, but apparently, we did hire foreign lawyers.

REP. DEL MAR. Yes, I believe, they did, Mme. Speaker, but that was not on the part of or the initiative of the Supreme Court, of the Judiciary, but it was on the part of the Executive, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Let me intervene, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. DEL MAR. Yes, go ahead please.

REP. SUAREZ. Maliwanag na po sa akin na iyan po ay katungkulan at responsibilidad ng Office of the Solicitor General. Tama po ba ako?

REP. DEL MAR. That is correct, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Ang Solicitor General po ay hindi kasama sa Judiciary family. Hindi po nila kasama ito, wala po ito sa ...

REP. DEL MAR. No, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. ... Department of Justice, wala po ito sa Supreme Court, wala po ito sa Ombudsman. Ang Solicitor General po ay kanino pong opisina?

REP. DEL MAR. I believe that the Office of the Solicitor General belongs to the Executive department and it is not part of the Judiciary family before us, Mme. Speaker. Otherwise, he would have certainly been here to attend also this presentation.

REP. SUAREZ. So, ang opisina po na tumulong at nag-aakda na—napakarami po kasi nating arbitration sa ibang kaso. Ang sinasabi po natin ay ang Solicitor General ang nangangasiwa sa pagkuha ng iba't ibang mga experts sa ganitong field at sila din po ang nagbabayad.

REP. DEL MAR. We do not know exactly, Mme. Speaker, what the arrangement was, but I am sure that for the official panel, experts were hired but there were also experts who helped our government panel without any compensation, Mme. Speaker, and entirely at their expense and on a voluntary basis as, I repeat, in the case of Justice Carpio. We already know that he is in possession of documents and other information which greatly helped the presentation of our case before the international court of arbitration, Mme. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SUAREZ. Distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, tapos na po ako doon sa isyu na iyan kasi, akala ko po sila ang nagbabayad. So, ang sinasabi po natin, kung iyan po ay nasa Executive office, maybe

the good Chair of the Appropriations Committee is here—can I request for a one-minute suspension of the session, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is suspended.

It was 10:53 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 10:54 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is resumed.

The Minority Leader is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Well, my concern, I think, will be heard in the interpellation of another agency. I just have—Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, this Representation authored the creation of the Court of Tax Appeals. In that particular law that was approved, there is a provision there that if the decision of the Court of Tax Appeals is based on merits, then it is final and ex—what do you call that final, and ex—what is the word again?

REP. DEL MAR. Executory.

REP. SUAREZ. Exe—well, whatever.

REP. DEL MAR. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. And the only time you can elevate that to the Supreme Court is when you question the law. Am I correct there?

REP. DEL MAR. The Minority Leader is correct.

REP. SUAREZ. Now, can I ask, how many tax cases were elevated to the Supreme Court, wherein they are questioning the law?

REP. DEL MAR. They have no figures yet, Mme. Speaker, but we will certainly get that information for the Gentleman and submit it as soon as we can.

REP. SUAREZ. I just would like to have statistics on how many and if there had been already judgment. I just would like to know the odds—kung ilan iyong nanalo, ilan iyong natalo. Kasi sa atin pong punto bilang Mambabatas, gumawa tayo ng hakbang upang mawala iyong issue ng long litigation ng court sapagkat alam po naman natin, noong mga nakaraang panahon, ang kaso ng korte ay inaabot po, kapag tax case, ng mga 30-40 years. Pending pa rin sila. That is

why we came up with this modern way of using only one court for taxation.

REP. DEL MAR. Of course, Mme. Speaker, we certainly understand that, being the principal author of the law creating the Court of Tax Appeals, he will certainly want to know how they fared and what their performance is. So, we will give the Gentleman the particulars, Mme. Speaker, as soon as we receive it from the Court of Tax Appeals. It is now being requested already.

REP. SUAREZ. What particular program does the Supreme Court have in mind to expedite their work, to come up with faster and quicker decisions in cases? For that, may I know how many pending cases are there in the Supreme Court right now, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. DEL MAR. The Supreme Court has a caseload, as of June 30 this year, of 8,077 cases, Mme. Speaker.

With regard to the Gentleman's first point, Mme. Speaker, which is very important, that cases be speedily decided, there are decongestion programs of the Supreme Court to address this problem of delays in the resolution of cases. They have the Hustisya Project, the decongestion activity that aims to reduce backlogs of 175 highly congested courts. Second, they have hired case-decongestion officers. These are contractual employees, and the target number is 635, who are deployed to the heavily burdened courts nationwide. There is also the Assisting Courts System, the program where burdened courts in Quezon City and Makati Metropolitan Trial Courts, including those Regional Trial Courts in Lapu-Lapu City and Mandaue City in Cebu, among others, are assisted by their counterpart courts with low dockets coming from their neighboring areas—in the case of Quezon City and Makati Metropolitan Courts, Manila Metropolitan Courts, and in the case of Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue in Cebu, the RTCs from Cebu City. And the continuous trial rules, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, approved by the Supreme Court that require judges in 52 pilot courts in the National Capital Region to speed up the trial and resolution of criminal cases by shortening the period of receiving evidence and limiting postponements, among others, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. We are both Congressmen, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. DEL MAR. Yes, of course.

REP. SUAREZ. And, during the time that we had the authority to identify the projects and give assistance to our constituents, we say that project delayed is project denied. You delay a project that our constituent are

entitled to, you delay it for some period of time and you are practically denying them those projects. It is just the same. Justice delayed is justice denied. And this is alarming—the backlog.

This will not be the proper time for us to come up with a serious debate because this budget was prepared by the previous administration. The ceiling was on what they could spend, as this was prepared by the previous administration. So, maybe we can give them elbow room and say, “Magbakkaban na lang tayo sa inyong budget for 2018.” But, in the meantime, I will say that with this amount that they ask for, the ceiling that was given to them by the DBM, maybe the appeal of the House is that, most of these cases, one way or another, involve some Members of Congress. Maybe, what we can ask them is, for the benefit of those who have been long awaiting hearing on particular issues wherein some of them believe they are innocent, sana mabigyan pa ng kaunti pang mabilis na pagkilos, sapagkat sila po ang Supreme Court. Iyon pong ibang korte nasa ibaba nila and maybe just a mere assurance from us. Ask your principal if they can drum their heads together, brainstorm among themselves and come up with some remedial solutions for just one purpose—expedite hearings, so we can find out who are the guilty and who are the innocent.

REP. DEL MAR. We agree with Your Honor, Mme. Speaker. Some of those I cited are just some of the decongestion programs towards the speedy disposition of cases. As emphatically stated, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, “justice delayed is justice denied,” so they are doing all these, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

Right now, there is a marked improvement in the disposition of cases in all levels, from the Supreme Court to the appellate courts down to the RTCs and municipal courts. They have been doing well, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. In fact, they are now in the process of implementing their programs to dispose of as many cases in their docket as they receive the same number coming in. So they are doing very well, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, and it will definitely be better in the future.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, maybe after this deliberation, in the *turno en contra*, I will just make an announcement now that we would like the leadership to come up with what we used to do before, and that is to oversee or analyze how a certain agency spends its money, bearing in mind that this amount being given to the Supreme Court and its attached agencies is taxpayers' money, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. DEL MAR. Yes, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker. That is certainly appreciated, Your Honor, Mme.

Speaker, your effort to help put up more programs to dispose of the cases as speedily as possible and we will be working with Your Honor on your inputs, and what we can put in during the period of amendments to really accomplish the objective that you mentioned, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Minority and there being no other member who would like to raise questions or interpellate on the proposed budget of the Supreme Court, I move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Supreme Court.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Judiciary.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is suspended.

It was 11:06 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 11:22 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is resumed.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of our guests from the Ombudsman: Ombudsman Conchita C. Carpio-Morales, Deputy Overall Ombudsman Melchor Arthur H. Carandang, Deputy Ombudsman Gerard A. Mosquera, Deputy Ombudsman Paul Elmer M. Clemente, Deputy Ombudsman Rodolfo M. Elman, and Deputy Ombudsman Cyril E. Ramos.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The distinguished Ombudslady Ombudswoman, Mme.

Conchita Carpio-Morales, and the rest of the honorable members of the Office of the Ombudsman are welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that we are in the period of interpellation and debate. I move that we begin the consideration of the budget of the Ombudsman. May we recognize our Sponsor, Hon. Doy C. Leachon, from the First District of Oriental Mindoro.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. The honorable Gentleman from the First District of Oriental Mindoro is recognized.

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, Mme. Floor Leader, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning.

We have the honor to present now the budget of the Office of the Ombudsman, amounting to P2.2 billion. And may we manifest further, Mme. Speaker, that we are ready for any interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize our House Minority Leader, Hon. Danilo E. Suarez for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. The distinguished Gentleman, Minority Leader Danilo Suarez, is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Distinguished Sponsor, just a very minor question to raise. This is the third time I have the privilege of meeting your principal. And I am sure that in the younger days of the Lady, marami siyang pinaiyak na lalaki. Pero, nababanaag pa rin po sa kanya ang kanyang angking kagandahan.

I would like to say, Mme. Speaker, that I would like to sleep soundly with what I have read:

Mission: As protector of the people, we shall endeavor in cooperation with all sectors of the Filipino society, to promote integrity, efficiency and high ethical standards in public service through proactive approaches in graft prevention and public assistance, prompt investigation of complaints and aggressive prosecution of cases filed against erring public officials and employees.

Two days ago, Mme. Speaker, we heard the budget of the Commission on Audit, and for the information of the Members, there will be a clear after-budget deliberation in meeting with the Commission on Audit, the local government, the DBM, and I ask that the officers of Congress who are involved in the budget to sit down with them to thresh out the issue of one basic principle, what we can do and what we cannot do.

I think a good number of cases that are being heard by the office of the distinguished Lady, which is the Ombudsman, are, what we call violations of the COA, what we said, disbursement or assignment of funds, which are not in accordance with the provision on the Commission on Audit, and thus, issues begin.

Do you agree with me on that, Mme. Speaker?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, kung magkakaroon po tayo ng ganyang pag-uusap, baka mabawas-bawasan na natin kasi sa atin hong karanasan—I think, you are used to being a public official, a locally elected official, before may mga kaso po tayo na retired na ho iyong ating mga dating lider na mayor, vice mayor, may mga kapitan pa, konsehal, bigla na lang nagkakaroon ng kaso because of a discovered disbursement that is not COA-approved.

So, kung magagawa natin iyan na mao-orient po tayo, because kung minsan po iyong ating pagnanais na makagawa ng maganda sa ating constituent, hindi natin alam, hindi ho pala iyan in accordance with what the COA says, hindi po ba?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker, I am in full agreement with the comment of the honorable Minority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ. So, ito hong budget na hinihingi ng Ombudsman ay P2 billion, am I correct?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. I just would like to ask, iyon hong mga lawyers na assigned to investigate cases, how much are they paid? Are they subject to standardization?

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, in connection with this query, I think the entry level would be Salary Grade 26, between Salary Grades 26 to 28, and they are receiving at least, more or less, about P70,000 monthly as...

REP. SUAREZ. Seventy.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. And that is subject to 30 percent taxes, is that correct?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, ang clean take-home po niyan, Pag-IBIG, GSIS, etcetera, we can safely assume, siguro baka ang take-home po niyan ay mga P35.

REP. LEACHON. Around P45,000.

REP. SUAREZ. Kung walang utang.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. That may be—do you consider that to be a comfortable salary to a—I mean, I am trying to be a devil's advocate here, ang sinasabi ko lang, hindi ba napaka ...

REP. LEACHON. More or less if you are asking...

REP. SUAREZ. You are trying to—please read my mind, you know what I am trying to say. So, please reply.

REP. LEACHON. I do not think, Mme. Speaker, that more or less would be the rightful compensation for a lawyer especially considering the nature and magnitude of the cases being handled by the Office of the Ombudsman. But, as per information, more or less, it is, more or less, equivalent to all of the compensation being received by any lawyer in any office of the government.

REP. SUAREZ. Siguro ho, distinguished Sponsor, two Congresses ago, I filed a bill wherein the two important agencies of the government which earn revenues for the country, BIR and Customs, na ang kanilang sahod, benefits, retirement, education, lahat, will depend on the percentage of what they collected, hoping that it will be a career position na with that amount of money, let us say po, ang amin pong estimate, a BIR examiner will get about P120,000 a month. Baka ho hindi na ma-tempt sa iba pang temptation na ika nga, alam ho ninyo na iyong gusto kong sabihin.

So, dito ho sa Ombudsman, alam po ninyo ang isang problema ng magkakaso sa opisina ng ito ay sa haba ng litigation, kung minsan, ay para ho itong Damocles' sword sa ulo mo na hangga't hindi mo nare-resolve ang isang kaso ay hindi ka nagkakaroon ng panatag na kalooban. So, ang gusto ko hong malaman, ilan pa po ang pending case na hinahawakan ng kanilang opisina?

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, honorable Minority Leader, per data gathered by the Office of the

Ombudsman since the assumption of the honorable Ombudsman Carpio-Morales, when she entered the agency or the office, more or less, we have, more or less, about more than 19,000 cases.

REP. SUAREZ. Nineteen?

REP. LEACHON. Nineteen. That was in 2011, both administrative and criminal.

REP. SUAREZ. Is that nine-zero or one-nine?

REP. LEACHON. One-nine.

REP. SUAREZ. One-nine.

REP. LEACHON. Almost 20,000, Mme. Speaker. But, after the lapse of, more or less, about five years in the bureaucracy, the number of cases is, more or less, now 7,000 distributed all over the country with, more or less, about 12,000 cases already disposed of under her watch.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, that will be dramatic, almost 11 to 12,000 of cases disposed, am I correct there?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker. Yes, honorable Minority Leader. More than 12,000 cases were resolved during her watch as Ombudsman of the country.

REP. SUAREZ. Certainly, a very related news. The administration of President Duterte has just reached 90 days after the end of September. What we have seen now and what we have seen in the previous years were several charges that even led to the imprisonment of some of our colleagues in the Upper House. I understand that this has the participation of the Office of the Ombudsman, am I correct there?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, I am not questioning neither raising any issues because I would like to admit to myself that considering the number of offices that heard this particular case that brought about the detention of some of our colleagues, there must be some factual basis, myself not being a lawyer as well.

On these past six years of the previous administration there were several cases filed that even involved malversation and plunder. May we know from the principal when we can see some of those cases to, I do not know the procedure, when the Ombudsman will say that there is probable cause and ask the principal to answer and then maybe go to the Sandiganbayan. Am I correct with my analysis of procedure?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker, if a case has been filed before the Office of the Ombudsman definitely it would be docketed into cases of either of two natures: one is administrative and one is criminal.

REP. SUAREZ. So, may I know distinguished Sponsor, how many pending cases are there in the Office of the Ombudsman which involve officers and men of the previous administration?

REP. LEACHON. We will just wait for the data, Mme. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SUAREZ. I move for a one-minute suspension of the session, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, may we request for a one-minute suspension, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. The session is suspended.

It was 11:36 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 11:37 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is resumed.

REP. LEACHON. Per information gathered by this Representation, the Ombudsman herself told me that there is no actual data as to how many cases in the previous administration had been filed. The proof of which would tell that they are actually not selective in the filing of any cases. I was informed that they will be resolving cases in accordance with of course, some cases may be old and they are disposed of accordingly. As of now what is more important is that the data would show that after the passage of about more or less six years under her watch, there was actually a huge decline or a huge number of disposal of administrative and criminal cases compared to the time that she entered the Office of the Ombudsman. As to the high-profile cases, it is noticeable that even officers or Secretaries or even officers of the previous administration were also charged and the cases have been filed before the Sandiganbayan.

REP. SUAREZ. Are there already, distinguished Sponsor, cases involving officials of the previous Administration that are now in the Sandiganbayan?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker. Yes, Sandiganbayan.

REP. SUAREZ. Do you have the-- can we have some numbers?

REP. LEACHON. Well, of course one of the leading cases that was filed before the Office of Sandiganbayan is the case involving the former PNP Chief Director General Alan L. Purisima and Secretary Juan Romeo Nereus "Neric" O. Acosta and Commissioner Maria Gracia Cielo "Grace" Padaca of the Commission on Elections, are among those, if you are asking who are the officials who were employed during the past Administration.

REP. SUAREZ. My recollection is that—I will not mention names because I was with the Minority then and they were asking for my help as a Minority Leader. They filed several charges, I think some are even for plunder. On a very confidential procedure, maybe I can raise the question privately to the distinguished Lady to find out what is the status, so that it will not be political. But the primordial concern was, the case involves a certain action that was somewhat damaging to the interest of the country. That is precisely the reason.

Ang prinsipyo kasi ng justice, if we would notice the statue, it is blindfolded. Hindi po ba, Mme. Speaker? Sinasabing walang tinitingnan at walang kinikilingan.

Magkaroon lamang po sana tayo ng comfort level. Napakarami nating nabalitaang katiwalian na nangyari noong nakaraang administrasyon, and I will cite one particular area wherein maybe your principal has the option to answer or not. The issue that we have raised when I was the Minority, may nawala tayong 3,400 containers sa Customs. Sa palagay ko naman hindi po nakalingat ang Office of the Ombudsman. Ang tanong ko lang, sa ganyang isyu na nababalitaan na may nawalang 3,400 containers, walang nag-file ng kaso, walang imbestigasyon na nangyari, iyan ba ang kung tawagin sa Latin ay *motu proprio*? Ang Office of the Ombudsman po ba in its own capacity cannot trigger an investigation to find out those allegations?

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, the law creating the Office of the Ombudsman, upon complaint or at its own initiative or *motu proprio*, can conduct investigations.

REP. SUAREZ. Kung walang nag-complain, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, the office on its own initiative can create a fact-finding committee and investigate as to the propriety of a case, a criminal case,

to be filed against the prospective suspects. In the case being alleged by the Gentleman a while ago, Mme. Speaker, regarding the containers, I was informed by the principal that there is now a fact-finding investigation before the Office of the Ombudsman.

REP. SUAREZ. That will be very enlightening, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

Siguro po, in the coming months, makakakita na tayo ng mga kaso na ifa-file ng Ombudsman that pertains to the cases of previous officers of the last administration. Ito naman ay comfort level din nating mga Mambabatas, na ang speculation or suspicion ng ating mga kababayan na subjective ang mga kinasuhan is not really true. Ngayon na tayo ay nasa bagong administrasyon, hindi po natin makakalimutan ang pagkakamali na ginawa ng mga nakaraang nanungkulan.

For that, I know very well your principal that, kung puwede lang po bigyan ako ng isang report na nabuksan na ang mga kaso kasi bago pa lang naman ang kasalukuyang administrasyon na ang mga dating nanunungkulan ay mahaharap na sa isang kaso based on the complaints of other parties.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker, we would like to assure our distinguished Minority Leader that the blindfold woman, as the central figure in the dispensation of justice, will always be observed by the Office of the Ombudsman.

With regard to the request for the report, as the cases to be filed involving officers of the previous administration, we will definitely accede to the request of the Minority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ. Is your principal comfortable with the budget, Mme. Speaker? Does she think she can perform for the next year with this amount?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Minority, considering that no other members would like to raise any other questions, I move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Office of the Ombudsman.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Office of the Ombudsman.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LEACHON. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Office of the Ombudsman is hereby terminated.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend session for a few minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is suspended.

It was 11:46 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 11:47 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is resumed.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of our guests in the gallery from the European Free Trade Association parliamentarians, namely:

From the Icelandic Members of Parliament delegation: Vilhjálmur Bjarnason, Valgerdur Bjarnadóttir, Stígur Stefánsson; (*Applause*)

From Liechtenstein delegation: Member of Parliament Elfried Hasler, Member of Parliament Harry Quaderer, Member of Parliament Sandra Gerber-Leuenberger;

From the Norwegian delegation: Member of Parliament Svein Roald Hansen, Gunnar Gundersen, Erik Førner, Ambassador of Norway to the Philippines, and Ms. Margrethe Saxegaard; Observers, Mr. Christopher Navelsaker of Confederation of Vocational Unions, and Mr. Jan Atteslander; and

From the EFTA Secretariat: Ms. Camilla Langsholt and Ms. Trine Berggren, Senior Officer and Secretary of the EFTA Consultative Committee.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Welcome to our fellow parliamentarians and welcome to His Excellency, the Ambassador of Norway. (*Applause*)

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 3408

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 3408.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

ROLL CALL

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we call the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 32, dated October 4, 2016.**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mme. Speaker, the roll call shows that 218 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). With 218 Members responding to the call, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 3408 *Continuation*

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 3408, and may request that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General is hereby directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 3408, entitled: AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FROM JANUARY ONETODECEMBER THIRTY-ONE, TWO THOUSAND AND SEVENTEEN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, the parliamentary status is that we are in the period of interpellation and debate.

REP. SAVELLANO. Mme. Speaker, before we

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

proceed, may we acknowledge the presence of our guests in the gallery, from the Department of Justice. They are the following: Sec. Vitaliano Aguirre II, Usec. Erickson Balmes, Usec. Raymund Mecate. Asst. Sec. Adonis Sulit, Sr. Dep. State Prosecutor Severino Gaña, Asst. State Counsel Ruben Fondevilla, Bureau of Corrections, OIC-Director Rolando Asuncion Bureau of Immigration Commissioner Jaime Morente, Land Registration Authority OIC Administrator Robert Nomar Leyretana, National Bureau of Investigation Director Dante Gierran, Office of Government Corporate Counsel OIC-Government Corporate Counsel Elpidio Vega, Solicitor General Jose Calida, Parole and Probation Administrator Manuel Co, Presidential Commission on Good Government Commissioner Reynold Monsayac, and Public Attorney Persida Rueda-Acosta.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Welcome to Sec. Vitaliano Aguirre and the members of the DOJ family.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

REP. SAVELLANO. Mme. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of interpellation and debate. I move that we begin consideration of the budget of the Department of Justice and its attached agencies.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. SAVELLANO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the First District of Oriental Mindoro, Rep. Doy C. Leachon to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Department of Justice and its attached agencies.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Honorable Leachon is recognized.

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, Majority Leader, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

We have the honor to present the budget of the Department of Justice or the DOJ family led by Secretary Aguirre, with a budget of more or less about P15 billion. We would like to manifest, Mme. Speaker, that we are now ready for any interpellation. Good morning.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SAVELLANO. I move to recognize the Hon. Jose L. Atienza Jr. of Manila—from BUHAY Party-List for his interpellation.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Jose “Lito” L. Atienza is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, salamat po, Majority Leader.

With the kind indulgence of the honorable Sponsor of the measure, we would like to ask just very basic details on the functions of the Department of Justice.

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, we are very glad to accept or to answer any queries of the Honorable Atienza.

REP. ATIENZA. Honorable Sponsor, we have always maintained that our criminal justice system is not as effective as it is, as it should be. Malaki po ang pagkukulang ng ating—pagpapatakbo ng ating mga koreksiyonal. At itong iskandalo sa New Bilibid Prison ang siyang pinakamalaking example, monumento ng kakulangan sa ating tamang pagpapatakbo ng kulungan ng mga sentensyado ng malalaking krimen. The recent scandals of the New Bilibid Compound should wake us all up and primarily the Department of Justice dahil hindi po ba sila ang nangangalaga ng New Bilibid Compound and Women’s Correctional, just to name some, a few.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Tinatanggap po ba natin na talagang malaki ang pagkukulang ng tamang pagbibigay parusa sa ating mga kriminal maski na iyong mga malalaking kriminal na dapat ay nagdurusa sa kulungan ay mukhang nabibigyan ng pribilehiyo at nag-e-enjoy sa kulungan. Eh hindi po tayo magkakaroon ng anumang mabisang paglaban sa kriminalidad kung ganiyan ang nangyayari. Sang-ayon po ba kayo roon?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. We would like to ask a very simple but very important questions now relevant to what we are all trying to do. Has the DOJ today initiated major changes in the New Bilibid compound considering that the former Department of Justice Secretary is now on the spot, because obviously she has failed?

Now we would like to ask the new Secretary, is he looking over the shoulders of those running our New Bilibid compound so that whatever special privileges being given to the inmates, they are now deprived of these, and are now treated as ordinary detainees having been sentenced to suffer detention and suffer in the New Bilibid area? Bago na po ba ang sistema o ganon pa rin po—business as usual?

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, as regards the query of the Honorable Atienza, it is quite apparent and it must be noted that during the committee hearing on the Committee on Justice, the DOJ through the distinguished Secretary presented to us the situation in the New Bilibid Prison prior to his assumption and the corrective measures that the DOJ and the Bureau of Corrections have done.

It must be noted, in fact, it is quite of public knowledge and it is a supreme irony that the maximum security cell serves to be the most lenient prison cell in the New Bilibid Prison. But with the assumption of the new administration and under the headship of Secretary Aguirre in the DOJ, he has implemented through the BuCor Chief, now General Asuncion, several measures and in fact, the public was notified that the operations now especially the guarding or the security of the New Bilibid Prison is being handled by the SAF.

The special privileges formerly enjoyed by the inmates in the maximum security area have now changed. The treatment of prisoners or inmates has been put into a standard wherein the kubol and the other privileges enjoyed by the inmates under the old administration have been dismantled. Now, more or less, the DOJ takes pride in saying that with the innovations being done in the New Bilibid Prison, it is undergoing an innovation towards a better prison facility, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Then we are forced to ask this question, Mme. Speaker. Noong isang araw na nagkaroon ng patayan, let us call it “a plot to kill,” as we would not want to consider what is being said that it was a riot, knowing very well the goings-on in the different prisons in the country, a riot would take the character of a different nature. Iyon po ay plot to kill. They wanted to kill some people within the New Bilibid compound. Now, who initiated it and who would have benefited by the killing or removal of certain valued prisoners or drug lords inside the New Bilibid Compound are the questions lingering in the minds of many. Obviously, ito po ay mayroong intensyon na alisin ang ilan sa mga drug lords na nabibilad ngayon. Kung nagtagumpay man o hindi, only time will tell. But at this point, we would like to ask, if the version being peddled now by some quarters is to be believed, nagkaroon po ng pot session bago nagkaroon ng patayan, papaano po nagkakaroon ng pot session ngayon kung sinasabi ninyong mayroon ng reporma ang pagpapatakbo o pagbabantay ay ginagawa na ng ating Special Action Force, at sabi nga natin mayroon nang serious effort to improve the conditions there, eh bakit po nagpa-pot session at doon po nagsimula ang patayan?

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, the different versions that we have now flashed on TV and other

news—in fact, my speculation is just good as the speculation of anybody, but as to the existence of a pot session or any plot or motive to kill is just premature as of this moment. I would like to manifest, through the manifestation of the principal, that there is actually an ongoing investigation being conducted by the CIDG as to the real motives, as to the real happening inside the New Bilibid Prison, where more or less, several inmates were wounded, so with the killing of a certain inmate.

As informed by the Chair or the BuCor Chief, General Asuncion, he was informed that the CIDG, more or less, has 80 percent of its investigation and sooner or later, the result of the investigation would be conveyed and relayed officially to the good Secretary of Justice who has jurisdiction over the Bureau of Corrections.

REP. ATIENZA. Honorable Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, we will be following closely the developments in the NBP as we know very well that this is the best monument of what we are trying to correct.

Hanggang mayroong special privileges ang mga nakukulong at hanggang sila ay binibigyan pa ng pribilehiyo at pagkakataong magnegosyo sa droga ay hindi po natin masusugpo ang problema ng droga. Ipataw man natin ang death penalty, double death penalty or triple death penalty, if the big criminals are given special privileges, kung sila man ay makukulong, ay hindi natin malalaban ang krimen. We should know that. We should accept that. It is the criminal justice system that should be reformed primarily and foremost, and not the punishment. The certainty of arrest and suffering from a sentence given any criminal would be the best deterrent to the commission of any crime.

We know very well that the shortcomings and the big failures of the criminal justice system were exacerbated by the former Secretary of Justice herself. I am one of those who were convinced that the former Secretary of Justice is guilty of many shortcomings in the performance of her duties. Kaya ang akin pong masasabi ay the earlier she is sued or brought to court, the better for our nation and our society crying for justice to be done to those who do not wield their powers fairly and correctly for the benefit of our people. Dahil kung hindi po, tuluy-tuloy lamang itong ating sideshow na hindi po naman entertaining. Katulad nga po noong pagsubok pumatay ng mga drug suspects o drug lords rather na suspected to have anything to do with the problem that we are not all confronting, ang tanong ko ay, sa opinyon ninyo, tama po ba iyong sinasabi ng dating Secretary of Justice na asset niya si Jaybee Sebastian, asset niya si Marcelino, manufacturing to marketing assets niya. Noong sinabi niyang asset niya, ay marami na ngayong gustong

pumatay doon sa taong iyon dahil inilagay niya sa panganib iyong buhay noong asset niya. Ako po ay nagtataka lamang, bakit hanggang ngayon, ang ating pinag-uusapan ay hearing—hearing in the Congress, hearing in the Senate. Why are cases not filed up to this point in time? Although I would not want to discuss the details, at this point, because we would not want to put the Department of Justice in a tight situation for them to even answer why. But my own query is that, cases should be filed already and we should put an end to all of these public scandals. We know already there are shortcomings, there are now testimonies and witnesses willing to say that certain violations of the law were committed, and in the process, lives are being endangered by this continuing sideshow that the nation is calling.

Kaya, ang amin pong maipapayo, ang aming masasabi sa ganang amin, kasuhan na po ang dapat kasuhan at sa korte na po pag-usapan ang lahat ng ito. Meanwhile, repormahin natin ang ating criminal justice system dahil ito po ang puno't dulo ng lahat. Kung nagkaroon man ng anumang collusion between the inmates and the Department of Justice of the past administration, we say that this is one of the main reasons we are now drowning with the problem of drugs in the country.

So, we wish the present Secretary all the best. Sana po ay maipakulong niyang lahat ang dapat makulong at manatili sa kulungan na hindi na po bibigyan ng kubol at bibigyan ng anumang pribilehiyo.

With that, Mme. Speaker, we have asked the questions to put on record the BUHAY Party-List's concerns about the issue of crime and punishment in the country. For as long as special privileges are given the criminals who are sentenced for their heinous crimes, we will not be able to correct the present situation. The death penalty is the answer. Reforms in the criminal justice system, iyan po ang makatutulong ng malaki.

Maraming salamat po sa inyong pakikinig at sa inyong pakikipagpalitan ng inyong kaalaman. Thank you.

REP. LEACHON. Thank you also, Honorable Atienza. Be rest assured that the Department will definitely file the case. What is happening now in the office of Congress, particularly the committee, will definitely be in aid of legislation in order to have the output of reforming the Bureau of Corrections.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SAVELLANO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Henry S. Oaminal of the Second District of Misamis Occidental.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The distinguished Gentleman, Congressman Oaminal, is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. OAMINAL. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Thank you, Majority Leader. Good morning, our distinguished Sponsor. Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to a few questions.

REP. LEACHON. Gladly, Mme. Speaker.

REP. OAMINAL. Mr. Sponsor, Land Registration Authority is one of the attached agencies of the Department of Justice, am I right?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. OAMINAL. And the mandate of this Agency is revenue generating which is responsible for the issuance of decrees, of registration, and certificate of title, and register documents, patents and other land registrations, am I right?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. OAMINAL. And this Agency is created by virtue of Presidential Decree No. 1529.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. OAMINAL. Section 111 of Presidential Decree No. 1529 provides, and I quote:

Twenty percentum of all the collections of the Registers of Deeds and of the Land Registration Commission under this Section and Sections 118 and 116 of this Decree shall be appropriated and upon approval of a budget for it by the Ministry of Budget, such amount shall be disbursed and all offices under the Land Registration Commission, for the purchase of such necessary equipment, for payment of allowances of officials and employees of the Commission, including those of the Registries of Deeds, as authorized by the Commissioner, for contracts regarding security printing of Land title forms, for survey contracts, and for the maintenance and other operating expenses of the Commission.

Am I right, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. OAMINAL. From the Gentleman's data, taking 2011 as a benchmark up to this current year, 2016, may we know if this particular provision of the law was fully implemented?

REP. LEACHON. Well, this Representation must admit, Mme. Speaker, that despite PD 1529 mandating the retention of the earnings of the LRA, there is, until as of this moment, no full-compliance of the mandate of the law. That is why during our budget briefings, the budget pre-plenary conferences, it was the undertaking of this Representation, so with the members of the Committee on Appropriations, to make the necessary representation with the Department of Budget and Management in order to pose a query as to why this mandate is not being done. We will be glad to tell our Honorable Oaminal from the distinguished province of Misamis Occidental that we will definitely convey to him the results of our conversation or our query with the Department of Budget and Management in order to fully comply with the mandate provided for by PD 1529, Mme. Speaker.

REP. OAMINAL. Thank you very much, Mr. Sponsor.

Does the Gentleman mean that, since 2011 up to 2016, as gleaned from this data, only 6 percent of the 20 percent was provided for in our previous General Appropriations Act?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. OAMINAL. During our Committee hearing, and it was also this Representation that pointed it out then, it was our consensus, and as fully endorsed by the good Secretary of the Department of Justice, that there is a need to increase this particular allocation in order that the mandate of the law shall be fully complied with. Am I right, Mme. Speaker?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. OAMINAL. In view of that, is the distinguished Sponsor willing, in the period of amendments, to amend Special Provision No. 1 under Land Registration Authority of the Department of Justice in order to fully comply with the provisions of the law, and to read as follows:

Land Registration Fees and Collections. In addition to the amounts appropriated herein, the amount of P1,277,766,600 shall be used for MOOE and Capital Outlay requirements, as well as payment of allowances for officials and employees of the Land Registration Authority, which represents within the full 20 percent of the Land Registration Fees and Collections which is hereby automatically released to LRA in accordance with Section 111 of PD No. 1529.

Meaning, this particular amount was paid from the 2015 actual annual income of the Land Registration Authority, which was P6,752,578,000.30.

So, will the distinguished Gentleman be glad to consider this proposed amendment, at the appropriate time, to this particular Special Provision of the LRA under the Department of Justice?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker, as regards the request, this Representation will gladly accede to the request, at the proper time, in the period of amendments, especially since we also have to consider that we will be meeting first with the Committee on Appropriations. So with our coordination with the Department of Budget and Management, definitely, I see nothing wrong as regards the request. Definitely, at the proper time, we will be the one to include this one upon proper consultation with the proper agencies of the government.

REP. OAMINAL. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

Now, during the budget briefing of the Department of Justice, considering the role that the Department is tasked in the current fight against illegal drugs by the Department, the good Secretary proposed the inclusion in their 2017 Budget the amount of P100 million for the construction of their DOJ Academy building, which was not considered by the Department of Budget and Management. But in said budget hearing, it was the unanimous consensus of all the Members present to take this into consideration. May we know the take of the distinguished Sponsor insofar as this allocation is concerned.

REP. LEACHON. It must be noted that most of the members of the Committee were present. With other Members of Congress who attended the Committee briefing, we are in accordance with the request. We requested then for the submission of a letter. We are just in receipt of the letter given by the distinguished Secretary of the Department of Justice, and I would like again to manifest before this plenary that we will be discussing this at the Committee on Appropriations immediately after this plenary deliberation. So, we will coordinate again with the DBM on how to source out, because as I said, we are in full agreement that this will be needed, provided that some coordination would be made before the proper agency, Mme. Speaker.

REP. OAMINAL. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. The Gentleman has done a good job. Congratulations.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano.).
The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SAVELLANO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize our Minority Leader from the Third District of Quezon, the Hon. Danilo Suarez, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano.). The Hon. Danilo Suarez, the Minority Leader, is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. I am in a quandary here. How can I interpellate a prestigious son of my district, the distinguished Secretary of Justice, a very good friend of mine? Paano ba ito? I-terminate na natin kaagad pero, mahahalata naman yata na napakalakas ng Secretary sa Minority kaya magtatanong na lang ho kami. I will delve into my questions, distinguished Sponsor, on the Office of the Solicitor General.

After deliberating on the budget of the Judiciary and the Office of the Ombudsman, I was made to understand that the payment for our hired foreign lawyers is under the budget of the Office of the Solicitor General. Is that correct?

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, as regards the query of the honorable Minority Leader, the payment as regards the attorney's fees of the foreign counsel is under the contingent fund of the Office of the President, not under the Office of the Solicitor General.

REP. SUAREZ. Oh, so, kung itatanong ko po, for instance, how many arbitration cases are there pending right now?

REP. LEACHON. As of this moment, there are seven cases.

REP. SUAREZ. Can we identify them one by one?

REP. LEACHON. The cases are: one, the one that involves the West Philippine Sea; two, the two cases of Malampaya, Shell-Malampaya; three, the Manila Water case; the one that involves the BGC; and the other case would be the case involving the LRDA, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. How about the PIATCO? Has that been resolved already?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker, the PIATCO case is one of those seven cases.

REP. SUAREZ. Now, the Gentleman did mention in his first answer that we hired foreign lawyers in the arbitration on the issue—the one in the Hague in the Netherlands. Who were the foreign lawyers and how much is our commitment fee?

REP. LEACHON. The counsel involved in that case would be White & Case. It is a Washington D.C.-based law firm. As regards the amount or fees, as legal fees or lawyer's fees, the OSG has no specific amount that can be manifested on the floor as of this moment, Mme. Speaker, considering the payment, as previously stated, is being managed and being paid out under the Office of the President using the contingent fund of the Office of the President.

REP. SUAREZ. So, wala pong nanggagaling na pondo sa DOJ or OSG for this?

REP. LEACHON. None, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Can I somewhat summarize that: they do not have the money to pay?

REP. LEACHON. The procedure done in the payment for foreign counsels is that it will be paid out of the Office of the President and coursed through the Office of the Solicitor General whenever payment is done afterwards, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, I will go to that, but who physically makes the payment? Sino ho talaga ang nagbabayad?

REP. LEACHON. The actual payment is done by the Office of the Solicitor General.

REP. SUAREZ. So, iyong pondo ho, hindi naman tinatanong ng OSG kung saan nanggagaling?

REP. LEACHON. As previously stated, it is forwarded to them by the Office of the President.

REP. SUAREZ. So, iyon nga, hindi nila tinatanong, "Saan ba galing ito?" Iyong kunyari, iyong PIATCO, galing ba ito sa NAIA? Ito bang MWSS, saan ba galing ito?

REP. LEACHON. There is a peculiarity in the PIATCO case, considering that the payment of the counsel was paid out of the MIAA fund. But as regards the payment for other foreign counsels, the payment is being sourced out from the contingent fund of the Office of the President.

REP. SUAREZ. Now, does the Office of the Solicitor General have data on that payment made by MIAA to the foreign lawyers?

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, we can provide the honorable Minority Leader, with regard the data, with the documents being asked or requested as of this

moment. But, as to the figure being requested, they cannot say with certainty how much was paid out for that case, but they have in their office the documents pertained to, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. I do not mean to be rude, distinguished Sponsor, but is the Gentleman a lawyer?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Iyon po bang binabayad natin sa mga foreign lawyers—I would assume that for the reason of them being more knowledgeable about those cases, kumukuha din sila ng mga local lawyers. Am I correct?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. And, wala po sa inyong record na hinahawakan ngayon kung sino iyong mga lawyers na kinuha natin on those arbitration and how much we paid them.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, may we request for a one-minute suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is suspended.

It was 12:36 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 12:38 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Ferdinand L. Hernandez presiding.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, apart from the White & Case, the foreign law firm based in Washington DC, we were informed that we hired local lawyers in the persons of Justice Feliciano and, when she was practicing, our Chief Justice Sereno. They were the two lawyers who presented the PIATCO case and were hired by the government.

As regards the payment, the OSG is now manifesting that payments were made to them but as to the amount, they are requesting it to be confidential considering that that would be a benchmark for future lawyers' fees whenever the government is involved. At the pleasure of our distinguished Minority Leader, however, the documents pertaining to the payment of attorney's fees

would be handed and submitted to the office of the Minority Leader, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, this Representation being not a lawyer—those cases were litigated in a foreign land, and payments were made to a Filipino citizen on a case that is being tried on a foreign land?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Those payments that were made to them, are they subject to local taxes in terms of income?

REP. LEACHON. Definitely, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, iyon po ay para, sinasabi ninyo taxable ka pa rin kahit na ang income ay na-generate mo sa America.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, bago mo ma-declare iyong income ay dapat i-declare mo iyan sa iyong SALN.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, those are my questions. Did these two lawyers that were paid by the government in this particular case wherein, let me stand corrected, ang binayaran po natin ay iyong foreign lawyers and I will assume, it was in US dollars. Am I correct?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. At iyon pong foreign lawyers ay nagbayad sa Filipino lawyer na nag-collaborate doon sa kaso, hindi po ba?

REP. LEACHON. Mr. Speaker, the payment to the local lawyers was directly paid to them and not coursed through the foreign lawyer.

REP. SUAREZ. Were they paid in pesos or in US dollars?

REP. LEACHON. In US dollars, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, wala po kayong idea kung magkano iyong naibayad. Hawak po ba ninyo iyong figures kung magkano?

REP. LEACHON. As of now, they have the figures definitely, Mr. Speaker, but as to the amount, with all due respect to the honorable Minority Leader, we will be, of course, giving the assurance that the

amount as well as the documents will be submitted to his office but not to be divulged here in the plenary considering the confidentiality on that matter, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, I will respect confidentiality of the nature of those cases but what I am saying is, at the end of the day payments were made and bearing in mind those payments are taxpayers' money.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, my information is somewhat disturbing. The information that was transmitted to the Office of the Minority is that, those amounts were declared in the SALN of these lawyers. So, hindi ko ho alam kung na-declare noong dalawang lawyers o isa lamang ang hindi nag-declare. So, these are very damaging information in as much as I do not expect the distinguished Sponsor to answer the query of this Representation. Right now, I would like to categorically have in black and white a position coming from the Office of the DOJ-OSG whether it is true that those revenues or legal fees that were paid by the foreign lawyers to our local lawyers were not included in the reported SALN.

REP. LEACHON. Well, as regards the Statement of Assets or the SALN, that is being requested, I think, from the other lawyer who right now is already not in the government. Well, it must be noted that it will not be definitely; definitely he is not obliged to have the SALN but with the other lawyer who is now the sitting Chief Justice, supposedly if that would be, definitely that would be in her SALN, but it is within the sphere and exclusive jurisdiction of the Supreme Court as regards the custody of the SALN and not within the Department of Justice, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Can I ask the support of my kababayan, the DOJ Secretary, on the issue of finding out whether it is true that even those in the local office of the Bureau of Internal Revenue who were aware, as this was submitted to the Office of the Bureau of Internal Revenue for taxation purposes, were silent on this particular issue and were fully aware that the SALN was not submitted during those times. This is very sensitive because this involves one of the very high ranking officers of the land, but we would just like to have some peace of mind that this issue must be once and for all clarified.

REP. LEACHON. Per the statement of the good Secretary, he has no definite data as of this moment but he assured us that definitely he would be securing the data being requested, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Assuming that indeed the SALN was not filed by this particular payee—ano ba ito payee or payor? Sino po ba iyong tumanggap?

REP. LEACHON. Payee, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. The payee.

REP. LEACHON. Payee.

REP. SUAREZ. And violated the basic issue of public officials that they should submit the SALN, will this fall under the jurisdiction of the DOJ?

REP. LEACHON. Well, it is the humble opinion of this Representation. So, with the position of the Department of Justice that the money or the income sourced out from that case whenever she, in that case that she represented the government, definitely that would not be a SALN issue considering that she was not a government employee during that time. But, definitely, I would accede to the statement or manifestation of the honorable Minority Leader that there is a tax issue on that matter but not a SALN issue considering, as I said, that she was not yet a government employee during that time so there is no obligation as to the submission of any SALN. But as regards the payment of taxes, definitely, we are in full agreement with the manifestation and comment of the honorable Minority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ. No. Because of the event, Your Honor, you stated that civilian pa siya, practicing lawyer, tumanggap po siya ng salapi bayad sa kanyang ginawang pagseserbisyo doon sa kaso. Hindi po ba ganoon ang scenario?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. And then naging public official ka.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. But, noong naging public official ka, kagaya mo, kagaya ko, kagaya nating lahat, nagsa-submit po tayo ng SALN.

REP. LEACHON. Definitely, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. At dapat nandoon po iyon.

REP. LEACHON. It would definitely be included but not in the nature of—well, it is common knowledge that when we make our SALN, it is not identified whether from what source of income. Definitely, it would be a sum of money being deposited in a bank, and that would be, in a generic sense, that there is an earning inclusive

of what she earned during the past time that she was not yet a government employee. Definitely, it would be there.

REP. SUAREZ. Let me intervene, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Minority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ. I will go back.

REP. LEACHON. Come again, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Hindi. Babalikan ko po nang kaunti iyong isyu, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, kumita po, at ang isyu, kung hindi niya isinama sa SALN sapagkat kinita niya iyan noong siya ay nasa private sector pa, parang ang sinabi mo, wala pong kaso iyon.

REP. LEACHON. What I am trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is that, if you earned that during the time that you were not a government employee, definitely there is no sense in filing or an obligation to file a SALN. But when afterwards I became a government employee definitely, I have that obligation to file the SALN. All of those earnings incurred before my assumption to government service would definitely be included in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities as a government employee. Definitely, it would be there.

REP. SUAREZ. Dapat po.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, it would be stated, but not ...

REP. SUAREZ. You say definitely but, I think, it should be, it must be.

REP. LEACHON. It must be included in the SALN, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, kung hindi po niya inilagay—sapagkat kapag nag—SALN ka, nagbayad ka ng income tax.

REP. LEACHON. Definitely, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. It must be.

REP. LEACHON. It must be.

REP. SUAREZ. Okay. So kung hindi po nagbayad ng income tax, may problema tayong ...

REP. LEACHON. Definitely, Mr. Speaker, for anyone who is not paying the ...

REP. SUAREZ. Then I agree with you, definitely, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Iyon lang po ang aking concern. Napakaselan ng isyu na ating tini-take up and this is the concern of the Minority. Gaya ho ng sinabi ko bago ako magtapos ng interpellation, Mr. Speaker, ang akin lang pong mensahe sa ating napakagiting na mabunying Kalihim ng Katarungan galing sa malayong bayan at makasaysayang maalamat na bayan ng Mulanay, sa nakikita ko pong takbo ng ating pamahalaan, uulitin ko ang sinabi ko two days ago, mukhang ang takbo ng ating Pangulo ay ito, “ako si Duterte susugpuin ko ang droga at aayusin ko ang peace and order.” Iyan po ang kanya at wala po tayong debate diyan at ginagawa na niya ngayon.

For this, I need the military and the police. Kaya po siguro binibisita niya ang lahat. Ngunit, iyon pong ibang ahensiya ng pamahalaan, Pananalapi, Employment, Health, Education, Welfare, Farming, Food Security, Justice—importante po ang Justice sa kanyang ginagawa, bahala kayo, parang ganoon. Foreign Affairs, lahat po, hindi ba? Mukhang ganoon po, macro, micro.

Dito ko po sinasabi na ang inyong ipinagtatanggol ngayon ay pera ng Katarungan which will play a major role in this program of the newly elected President. Kaya, siguro, ang atin pong thrust, being in the Minority is a cohesive working relation that the President, with all our prayers, will be successful in what he is doing.

Henceforth, siguro sa punto po ng *turno en contra*, iha-highlight ko ulit iyan, na ito po ang punto ng ating gobyerno and we should adjust bagama’t kayo po ay hiwalay sa Executive at Legislative ay dapat po naman ay cohesive ang ating pagsasamahan.

With that, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minority and there being no more Members who would like to raise any issue or question on the proposed budget of the Department of Justice including its attached agencies, I move that we terminate the period of interpellation on the proposed budget of the Department of Justice and its attached agencies.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SAVELLANO. On behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation on the budget of Department of Justice and its attached agencies.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). There is a joint motion by the Majority and the Minority to terminate the period of interpellation on the budget of the Department of Justice and its attached agencies.

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The period of sponsorship and interpellation on the budget of the Department of Justice is hereby terminated.

REP. SAVELLANO. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SAVELLANO. I move that we suspend the session to resume at two o'clock.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is suspended and will resume at two o'clock.

It was 12:54 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:07 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Mylene J. Garcia-Albano presiding.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is resumed.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

REP. DEFENSOR. Good afternoon, Mme. Speaker.

The parliamentary status, Mme. Speaker, is that we are in the period of interpellation and debate on House Bill No. 3408, and with that, Mme. Speaker, I move that we take up the budget of the Commission on Elections.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. From the Commission on Elections, Mme. Speaker, may we greet Chairman Andres D. Bautista, Commissioner Al A. Parreño, Commissioner Luie Tito F. Guia, Commissioner Arthur R. Lim, Commissioner Ma. Rowena Amelia V. Guanzon, and Commissioner Sheriff M. Abas.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Chairman and the Commissioners of the Commission

on Elections are hereby welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. To sponsor and to respond to the interpellations, Mme. Speaker, may we recognize the Hon. Doy Leachon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Honorable Leachon is recognized.

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, Dep. Majority Leader, Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon.

We have the honor to present the COMELEC budget, of course, headed by Chairman Bautista, in the amount of P3.1 billion. We are ready for interpellation, Mme. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Before we proceed to the interpellation, Mme. Speaker, I move for a minute of suspension.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is suspended.

It was 2:09 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:11 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is resumed.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, first to interpellate, may we recognize the honorable Minority Leader, the Gentleman from the Third District of Quezon, the Hon. Danilo Suarez.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The distinguished Gentleman, the Minority Leader, Cong. Danilo Suarez, is hereby recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to some questions and interpellations?

REP. LEACHON. Gladly, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. With the postponement of the barangay election, how much did we save?

REP. LEACHON. More or less, about more than P6 billion, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, may excess silang P6 bilyon ngayon because it will not be spent?

REP. LEACHON. Come again, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SUAREZ. Are they prepared to spend P6 billion had the barangay election been scheduled?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker. Actually, it was included in last year's General Appropriations for 2016.

REP. SUAREZ. So, kung hindi nagastos, may savings silang P6 billion?

REP. LEACHON. It will be again accommodated for next year's election in 2017.

REP. SUAREZ. In the meantime, they have in their coffers P6 billion.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker, except that prior to the postponement that we had, there were already some expenditures incurred in relation to the supposed election of the SK and barangay elections, for registration and the printing of ballots. We have been informed that in view of this postponement, they have already stopped the printing of the ballots. So, part of the P6-billion budget supposedly for the 2016 elections was already spent.

REP. SUAREZ. Does the distinguished Sponsor mean that some amount of money for that specific purpose has already been spent by the COMELEC, anticipating that there will be a barangay election?

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. May we know how much?

REP. LEACHON. More or less, about P200 million, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, I have here a text message. The text says, "This might interest you. The following are the results that ..."—this might be parochial on my part because I campaigned for this candidate during the May elections—"... Vice President Binay got, by cluster precincts, including OAV..." What is OAV, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. LEACHON. That pertains to the result of votation of overseas in the last election, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. "... including OAV, zero vote for 1,174 precincts." Is that possible?

REP. LEACHON. The Chairman, Mme. Speaker, is asking for specific details as to the ...

REP. SUAREZ. Where are the precincts?

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, they will look into the veracity of the information given to our honorable distinguished Minority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, okay. But that is rather surprising. I think the good Chairman will say this, na mukha namang hindi kasi 1,100 precincts, then you have no vote, considering you are the incumbent Vice President. Hindi po ba? Am I correct there? Surprising?

REP. LEACHON. Well, it may sound and look surprising but then, until and unless we have looked into the details, especially as to the number of precincts as well as to the details, then we will be glad to inform the good Minority Leader as to the actual results.

REP. SUAREZ. If I may continue, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, ...

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. "One vote for 1,041 precincts"—one vote. Let me continue: "two votes for 1,181 precincts; three votes, 1,163 precincts; four votes, 1,189 precincts; five votes, 1,236 precincts."

REP. LEACHON. Well, yes, Mme. Speaker. We understand the information being given to us but as of now, given the absence of the specific details as to the precincts, we cannot, in full, confirm the veracity of the details given to us, Mme. Speaker. It may sound very surprising, but then ...

REP. SUAREZ. But did this information reach the Chairman? Is he aware of this?

REP. LEACHON. He is not aware of that, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, kung maa-identify natin kung saan itong mga clustered precincts na ito, the Chairman will say na it is odd and it is strange na pare-pareho. Hindi bale na. Puwedeng sabihin mo na may nakuha kang 10 na boto dito, zero dito, 15 roon, pero lahat one, lahat two, lahat three, lahat four, lahat five...

REP. LEACHON. Well, if that, plainly on that information, well, it is my humble opinion also that it actually is statistically improbable. But then, the Chairman maintains the statement that we cannot give

an accurate response without looking into the specific precincts.

REP. SUAREZ. How many precincts do we have in the country, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. LEACHON. The accurate number of precincts is 92,509 precincts all over the country, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, we are talking here of almost 10,000 precincts? No, no, no, let me be corrected, Mme. Speaker, 6,750 precincts or roughly less than one percent ...

REP. LEACHON. One percent.

REP. SUAREZ. ... of the total number.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker. More or less, about 1 or less than 1 percent of the total number of precincts nationwide.

REP. SUAREZ. How many voters do we have at the average per precinct?

REP. LEACHON. Per precinct, more or less, it would run more or less about, five to 1,000. At an average, it would be about more or less 800 voters per clustered precinct, per clustered precinct.

REP. SUAREZ. Eight hundred.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. You know, during the previous campaign, we banked on the fact that we campaigned for barangay captains, we campaigned for senior citizens considering that the only candidate for President who is a senior citizen is the Vice President. We thought that in every precinct there must be a single, a senior citizen. Siguro sa bawat presinto, safely maybe, 30 percent are senior citizens or maybe even more. Thirty percent might be a good number, would you think, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. LEACHON. Well, in our case, well, parochially, also in our district, probably about an average, about 20 percent, Mme. Speaker, of these senior citizens.

REP. SUAREZ. Distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, if I can get the number and exact location of these precincts, and I want to find out the veracity of whether the candidate really got an average of one vote sa lahat ng presintong ito, would it be a glaring issue that might disturb the Commissioners of the COMELEC?

REP. LEACHON. Well, it is the humble opinion of this Representation also that if that case would happen, that is actually very glaring, and in fact, really very surprising result of any election. But as I said, they already did a random manual audit nationwide and it turned out to have at least 99 percent veracity of the turnout for each and every precinct nationwide. Just the same, we will accede to the request of the good Minority Leader if we will only know the specific number of precincts being alleged to have that result given to him. Once we receive all of the details of the precincts, we will be glad to look into it. Definitely, at the soonest possible time, we will inform the Minority Leader of the results on whether it would match the information given to him, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. In the event, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, that I can identify the allegation, I am not saying that this is true, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. LEACHON. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. I am not saying that this is correct, that this is true; the veracity was founded. I am not saying that. It was just texted to me by a very responsible person who is very much concerned about the result of the previous election. Ngayon, kung sakali pong i-identify sa akin noong nagpadala ng text na ito kung nasaan iyong mga presintong ito, and this is a clustered precinct, can the Commissioner assure us that they will open 10 percent of those alleged 1,100 precincts and find out whether the candidate really got one vote na lahat puro one vote?

REP. LEACHON. Definitely, Mme. Speaker. Number one is that in every election I would say that the foundation of any institution or democratic institution in this country especially if the officers hold the position by election, definitely the integrity of every election is very much at stake. Now, as to the request of who will open it, any opening of the ballots apart from the random manual audit that is undertaken by the COMELEC, they should be propelled by the institution of any complaint by any interested party in that election and that would definitely propel the opening of the ballots and to see the results of the vote counting machine vis-à-vis the actual statements or details as stated in the ballot.

REP. SUAREZ. Distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, I am not asking, neither I am saying that we should open these ballots or find out the veracity of whether it is true or not, as that would entail expenditures and this Representation is not offering to pay for that expenditures.

My question is: Will the Office of the COMELEC voluntarily check a portion of those mentioned precincts and find out whether the said candidate really got a uniform one vote in all of those precincts?

REP. LEACHON. Well, per statement of the Chairman, Mme. Speaker, on its own, as I said previously, apart from the random manual audit undertaken, more or less, that would reflect the total or the total results during the previous election, there must be some sort of procedural requirement and principally, among others, is the institution of any complaint or petition by any interested aggrieved party. If there is a feeling that he was aggrieved by any result of that election, then he needs to file that election protest before the Office of the COMELEC, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, minus a formal complaint filed in the Office of the COMELEC, what can be the best assistance that this office can do to find out whether this—assuming that I can find out where these precincts are, what can be the best assistance or effort for us to have comfort, you know, peace of mind that, indeed, this thing did not happen? I mean, a mere statement from the Chairman saying that, “Well, the text that you sent, that was received by you, Congressman Suarez, is not correct. We opened some of these. Your candidate got five, seven, eight, and not a uniform zero vote or one vote.”

REP. LEACHON. Mme. Speaker, I just got a statement from the Chairman that a mere letter coming from the House of Representatives, of course, through the Minority Leader, that a request to open at least 10 percent of it, they would entertain it as soon as they have the specific details of the precincts as well as the ballots. If there would be a letter, they would be glad to entertain such a query from the good Minority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ. That is very comforting, Mme. Speaker, to the distinguished Sponsor, and with that assurance, I think we can somewhat have peace of mind that, indeed, allegations like this—kasi sa election po, tatlo lang naman; iyong nanalo, masaya; iyong natalo, nadaya. Iyan lang po tayo, hindi ba? So, iyong natalo na natalo dahil sa kakaunti ang boto, fair and square, wala pong problema. Pero iyong nadaya, lalung-lalo na iyong iba sa atin na nangampanya po ng mahabang panahon para sa ibang kandidato ay mawala lang po.

With that, Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Minority, and there being no more members who would like to raise questions on the proposed budget of the COMELEC, I move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Commission on Elections.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. LEACHON. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SAVELLANO. Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the COMELEC.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Commission on Elections is hereby closed.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SAVELLANO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is suspended.

It was 2:30 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:30 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is resumed.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY

REP. SAVELLANO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider the budget of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, headed by Chairman Martin Diño. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Sponsor, the Hon. Joey Sarte Salceda.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The honorable Vice Chairman, Cong. Joey Sarte Salceda, is recognized to sponsor the budget of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. The Honorable Salceda may have the floor.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SALCEDA. Ready to answer questions, Mme. Speaker. But may I ask for a one-minute suspension to allow the key officers of the SBMA, Clark and the BCDA, to take their seats so that their presence can be acknowledged by this august Chamber, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
The session is suspended.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker.

It was 2:31 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:32 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
The session is resumed.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, before we proceed, I move that we acknowledge the presence of before we proceed, our guests from the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority: Chairman Martin B. Diño, Administrator Roberto V. Garcia, and all the other officers of the SBMA, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
Chairman Martin Diño and Administrator Bobby Garcia, and the rest of the SBMA family are welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Yes. I move that we recognize our Minority Leader, the Hon. Danilo E. Suarez, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).
The Hon. Danilo E. Suarez, our Minority Leader, is recognized for his interpellation.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

Ito po bang SBMA can stand on its own, meaning, kahit na wala na pong appropriation from the Republic funds, they can survive?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, po, Mme. Speaker, they can.

REP. SUAREZ. They are earning more than what we are appropriating for them.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, Mme. Speaker. Last year, kumita ho sila ng P766 million after tax.

REP. SUAREZ. How much are they asking this time?

REP. SALCEDA. Ang hinihingi po nila ngayon ay P1.6 billion po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, kulang. Kulang po iyong revenue against ...

REP. SALCEDA. Mme. Speaker, kasi, ito po ay subject po sa isang investment agreement ng Pilipinas at ng isang major investor na ang pangalan po ay Hanjin. Ito po talaga, actually, ay mga inutang na o nagamit na ng mga power subsidy—kasi noong panahon po na 2008, siguro alam naman po ng lahat na dumaaan po sa napakatinding krisis, pinakamatindi since 1935, ang buong mundo. So, nagkaroon po ng matinding labanan para sa mga investment. Inilaban po noong dating Pangulo, Pangulong Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, na iyong Hanjin at iba pa pong investors ay huwag lilipat sa mas murang lokasyon tulad ng Tsina; at iyong mura po doon ay mura po iyong kanila pong power. Kaya po noong panahon na iyon, e ...

REP. SUAREZ. No.

REP. SALCEDA. ... binigyan po ng—yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. I am sorry to intervene, distinguished Sponsor, but ...

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. ... apparently, they have a preferred rate for their power.

REP. SALCEDA. Come again, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Ang power po ng Hanjin is not commercialized power as what is in the national capital—they have a preferred power rate.

REP. SALCEDA. Pero nagbigay po tayo ng power subsidy, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. That is what I am saying. Sina-subsidize po natin para hindi ho mataas ang kanilang power dahil sa nagsa-subsidize tayo.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po.

REP. SUAREZ. Okay.

So, ang concern ko ho ay ito. Apparently, iyong tini-train namin sa TESDA na welder, karamihan po ay dito nagtatrabaho.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. SUAREZ. So iyong—I had the privilege of inviting the Chair, the Director, the Administrator for lunch in my office 30 minutes ago. Did you enjoy the duck, Mr. Administrator?

REP. SALCEDA. Napakasarap daw po, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. That is free. We do not charge you for that.

Dito po sa workforce ninyo ng welder, ilan po ang babae as compared sa lalaki?

REP. SALCEDA. Nobenta porsiyento, 10 percent lang po ang babae.

REP. SUAREZ. Ten percent lang ang babae.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. SUAREZ. Ninety percent ay ...

REP. SALCEDA. Lalaki.

REP. SUAREZ. But apparently, ang mga babaeng welder ay assigned to what we call “delicate welding job,” welding work. Iyon pong sensitive na kailangan ay ayos na ayos ang pulso ay babae po ang ginagamit na welder.

REP. SALCEDA. Iyon din po ang pagkakaintindi ko, Your Honor, na iyong kailangan po ng matinding konsentrasyon ay ibinibigay po sa mga babae.

REP. SUAREZ. Can we have a rationale—bakit po kapag sa sensitive na welding ay babae at kapag mga ordinary welding ay lalaki.

REP. SALCEDA. Iyong mga lalaki po ay nalalagay dahil po sa hazard. Iyong mga babae po ay kinukuha because of their manual dexterity.

REP. SUAREZ. You mean to say magaling po at steady.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. SUAREZ. Tama po iyong init, tama po iyong sunog doon sa welding procedure, ganoon.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. So, you are saying na ang lalaki hindi kalmado masyado.

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi ko po alam, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, ...

REP. SALCEDA. Wala po akong science niyan.

REP. SUAREZ. ... siguro I will attribute it to basic anatomy of a human body. Ang kamay po ng lalaki lalo

na ang kanan ay gamit sa ibang bagay. Baka ho iyong pulso natin ay talagang hindi maayos. Hindi katulad ho ng babae, wala hong pinaggagamitan iyong kaliwa’t kanan. So, maybe that is the reason. Kasi iyong mga lalaki, nagtatrabaho po tayo, buhat, kung anu-ano. So, ika nga, iyong pulso natin ay affected, iyong nerve for that matter. Hindi ho ba? Maybe that is the reason. But do women get a preferential rate? Do they get more than the men?

REP. SALCEDA. Same po.

REP. SUAREZ. The same.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. SUAREZ. Iba po ang Hanjin Shipbuilding sa Hanjin Shipping.

REP. SALCEDA. Malayo po.

REP. SUAREZ. Hindi ho pareho.

REP. SALCEDA. Ang Shipbuilding po at saka ...

REP. SUAREZ. So, kung iyong Hanjin Shipping ay medyo hindi po maganda ang balance sheet, iyon po namang Hanjin shipping is in the black.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, ah, iyong Hanjin Shipbuilding ay tuluy-tuloy.

REP. SUAREZ. They are not in the black?

REP. SALCEDA. Wala po.

REP. SUAREZ. Ang in the red ay Hanjin Shipping.

REP. SALCEDA. Iyong shipping line po.

REP. SUAREZ. Do we have a possibility that because of this precarious condition of the mother company, which is Hanjin, magsara ang Hanjin Shipbuilding?

REP. SALCEDA. Wala po.

REP. SUAREZ. Hindi magsasara.

REP. SALCEDA. Wala po. Wala pong relasyon.

REP. SUAREZ. Pareho pangalan, ibig sabihin si Hanjin Shipping and Hanjin Jin Shipbuilding are not related, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. SALCEDA. Your Honor, iyong nagkakaproblema siguro iyong kapangalan o same name ang ...

REP. SUAREZ. Can ...

REP. SALCEDA. The owners are not the same, Your Honor. The owners are not the same, Your Honor, because they are both listed in the stock exchange, so they have a different majority dominant coalition, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, as long as we have the—ilang pong libo iyong nagtatrabaho sa Hanjin Shipping?

REP. SALCEDA. Thirty-three thousand two hundred sixty-nine.

REP. SUAREZ. Wow. That is enough to propel the economy of the whole province, 33,000 workers.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, that is the number of jobs I was able to create when I was a governor for nine years.

REP. SUAREZ. Oh, really.

REP. SALCEDA. One single investment can do what a governor can do in nine years.

REP. SUAREZ. We will, certainly, move to nominate you to be the Secretary of Labor.

REP. SALCEDA. I would rather have Hanjin, Your Honor, in Albay.

REP. SUAREZ. Do they have still in their yard the contaminated materials brought about by the storage of nuclear weapon before?

REP. SALCEDA. There are no toxic materials, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. No pollutants ...

REP. SALCEDA. I asked them. Wala po.

REP. SUAREZ. Wala na.

REP. SALCEDA. Wala. Mayroon po silang ginawa po na due diligence because papasok po siya sa jurisdiction natin at may mga batas po dapat tayong sundin.

REP. SUAREZ. Distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, noong Pangulo pa po ang Pangulong Erap, binanggit po iyan ni President Clinton that, if I may

quote him, he said that: “We are going to come up with measures to make sure that those will be properly moved out without contaminating the environment.” And he was talking about waste of nuclear weapons.

REP. SALCEDA. Apparently, Your Honor, that referred to Malampaya, rather than to Hanjin, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Distinguished Sponsor, there are only two ports in the whole world that can dry dock an aircraft carrier that is normally fuelled by a nuclear reactor, and one of them is Subic Bay. Kapag ho nag-dry dock ka ng isang nuclear reactor, aircraft carrier, hindi mo maiiwasan na magkaroon ng traces ng nuclear waste.

So, ang tinatanong ko ho, can we safely say na nuclear pollution free ang SBMA?

REP. SALCEDA. I think, it is in our Constitution and the only way to answer that, Your Honor, is that it is nuke-free.

REP. SUAREZ. Did you get the assurance from your principal, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, I asked them.

REP. SUAREZ. Okay. I have no more questions to raise and in as much as the Minority members—I do not have any more questions to raise. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize Representative Edcel C. Lagman from the First District of Albay for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Representative from the First District of Albay, the Hon. Edcel Lagman, is hereby recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to a few questions?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mme. Speaker, I am getting used to it.

REP. LAGMAN. You better do because there will be additional interpellations, if necessary.

REP. SALCEDA. I always ...

REP. LAGMAN. For other agencies which you sponsored.

REP. SALCEDA. I always comply, Mme. Speaker, with your wishes.

REP. LAGMAN. I have nothing against the newly minted Chairman of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. In fact, he comes from the Bicol Region, more particularly, the province of Sorsogon. I am making this interpellation just to make certain important matters on record.

Reading the law which created the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, the Chairman wears three hats: one, as Administrator of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority; two, as ex-officio Chairman of the board of the Subic Authority; and three, as Chief Executive Officer of the Authority. Is that correct, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. I am also informed that Chairman Martin B. Diño used to be a Barangay Captain and Chairman of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption or the VACC. Is that correct?

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, Mme. Speaker, may I know from the distinguished Sponsor, whether the law prescribes qualifications for the position of chairman of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

REP. SALCEDA. I guess, Mme. Speaker, the only qualification under the law is to be professional manager.

REP. LAGMAN. A professional manager.

REP. SALCEDA. That is right, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Are there any other qualifications?

REP. SALCEDA. None, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, under the law, members of the board shall have qualifications, and the chairman is a member of the board. The other qualifications would be “recognized competence in relevant fields including but not limited to economics, management, international relations, law or engineering.” Is that correct?

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. That is correct. What do we understand, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, from the phrase “professional manager?”

REP. SALCEDA. We can split it into two. “Manager” means leading, planning, organizing, directing, and overseeing. “Professional” strictly speaking, means a profession duly recognized by the Professional Regulation Commission. However, Mme. Speaker, in general parlance of the economy, “professional” means a practice of, like practice of managing that requires a particular skill, a particular world view, Mme. Speaker, that is necessary, so, he can effectively do his job as a manager.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay.

REP. SALCEDA. So, if you combine both, Mme. Speaker, I think the Chairman is—and thus, the President is well within his—to choose—is well within his, not prerogative, but rather his duty to put somebody in SBMA that would be able to perform professionally the management functions required of an SBMA Chairman, Your Honor. In short, the three multiple—the three multi-tasking functions of the SBMA Chairman, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. I am not questioning the authority or prerogative of the President to make appointments. He has the power to appoint. But, of course, he should be guided by certain standards particularly standards provided for by law. Is that correct?

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, how do you understand “recognized competence in economics?”

REP. SALCEDA. And all the such other, but not limited to ...

REP. LAGMAN. I am trying to particularize the different sequences of this particular qualification. It says here, “recognized competence in economics”.

REP. SALCEDA. Economics, Your Honor, refers to the allocation, mobilization, and distribution of resources, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay.

REP. SALCEDA. So, in short, Your Honor, “competence” means, if you know how to budget, for example. Let us say, for a household or for a firm, Your Honor, in other words, you know how to finance your

operation, make sure that the operations earn money so you can distribute it to your workers by way of wages or to pay your bankers. So, in short, Your Honor, but economics as it is broadly understood or more popularly understood, refers of course to the general aggregates like production, investments, trade, commerce, social welfare or social development, and of course, monetary and fiscal policy, Your Honor, just like what we are doing right now, Your Honor. So, that could be the economics that has become popular, although the root word of economics actually like home economics, it is also called home economics because that is the ability to use the resources properly so the needs of the family are provided for, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. But we are not talking here of home economics because this is a very important agency, the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. So, the standards of home economics will not apply, but the other standards you have mentioned sufficiently describe the meaning of “recognized competence in economics.” How about “recognized competence in international relations,” what is the understanding of the distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, on this particular qualification?

REP. SALCEDA. There are only three types, Your Honor: buyers, in other words, trade, tourist, then third, investor. So, those are the three economic functions where international relations is required. You want more tourists, you want more buyers or sellers, as you need the inputs for—like Hanjin. Of their total, only \$50 million of their total sales of P6 billion was locally sourced but it produced a lot of jobs.

So, the third one, Your Honor, is as investor. So, I think those more broadly, Your Honor, require international relations because you need foreign buyers, foreign tourists, and foreign investors, Your Honor. So that, I guess, Your Honor, that—I mean, Your Honor, international means foreign, “inter”—between nations, and therefore, between Filipinos and other nations, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, how would you relate this particular qualification “recognized competence in law”?

REP. SALCEDA. I guess, Your Honor,

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, is this qualification pointing to the standard of being a lawyer or a member of the Bar?

REP. SALCEDA. I guess, Your Honor, the practice or the implementation of law, like I became a governor, I know that the ordinary barangay captains, they have

alternative dispute settlement, Your Honor. Therefore, that requires a lot of understanding of what is just and what is legal, Your Honor, and in the process of approving certain resolutions within the barangay, they would know the limitations as well as the powers of the barangay as a basic political unit. In other words, and in the relations with higher authorities like Congressmen, town Mayor, or Governor or even, Your Honor, national government agencies that will certainly require, Your Honor, I would say, a layman’s understanding of the law. Therefore, Your Honor, I would say that especially as head of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, a crime is only a crime if it is set by law, and corruption is only corrupt as far as it is defined by law. In short, Your Honor, I guess the nominee of the President or the appointee of the President in this case, Your Honor, certainly complies with, I would say the operations of law both as a barangay captain and second, as head of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, exposure to subjects or work related to law would be sufficient and one does not necessarily need to be a lawyer and a member of the Bar. Is that correct?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. What is the take of the distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, with respect to “recognized competence in engineering”?

REP. SALCEDA. When you say “competence in engineering,” definitely Your Honor, we are entering a field under PRC where it is one of the various engineering domains as a minimum standard; and second, Your Honor, in terms of the projects or the other experience or expertise that you have been able to assemble either individually or, perhaps, as a manager of a corporation where this engineering expertise has been so assembled or acquired in order to achieve certain goals of the organization.

In short, Your Honor, there are two ways, one from the PRC-recognized engineering; second, in terms of expertise acquired or assembled because your organization, like some companies in Ayala are headed by management experts, not by engineers, although their companies actually are engineering companies, Your Honor. So, in that sense, Your Honor, that is my understanding of “recognized competence” in the field of engineering, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. To make a long answer short, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, it means expertise by academic training, so one is an engineer or has the expertise acquired because of experience. Is that correct?

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, why does the law require stringent qualifications for one to be appointed as chairman, administrator, ex-officio chairman of the board and chief executive officer of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority?

REP. SALCEDA. May I ...

REP. LAGMAN. . What is the reason for the law in prescribing stringent qualifications for the position of chairman, administrator, ex-officio chairman of the board, and chief executive officer of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority?

REP. SALCEDA. Because of a goal wherein Subic is the crown jewel of the Philippines in terms of its ability to attract foreign investors, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker. Therefore, we need to centralize these powers, and for greater decisiveness, the three positions are combined into one. As designed by Congress, we wanted Subic as an instrument of national development because we wanted a central figure with all these powers so they can compete more decisively in a highly intense market for foreign investors or foreign commerce, as well as for foreign tourism. Thus, the centralization of these three broad powers in only one person, Mme. Seaker, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. For my last query, Mme. Speaker. Does the distinguished Sponsor agree with the President in appointing the incumbent Chairman to a crown jewel authority like the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and thus, he endorsed the said appointment?

REP. SALCEDA. I think the crown jewel rests soundly, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, on the head of the appointee of the President.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you so much for the Sponsor's superlative answer. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from COOP-NATCCO Party-List, Rep. Anthony M. Bravo, Ph.D., for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The distinguished Gentleman, Cong. Anthony Bravo, is hereby recognized.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished Floor Leader.

Will the good Sponsor from the Second District of Albay yield to some questions from this Representation?

REP. SALCEDA. Willingly, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. It is a Bicol festival, so the Honorable Bravo, also from Sorsogon, can certainly...

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

At the outset of my interpellation, I would like to congratulate the newly appointed Chairperson of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. We all know him. Had it not been him, there will be no Pres. Rodrigo Duterte in the history of the country's presidency. Congratulations, my good friend.

Mme. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the newly appointed chair of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, through the Sponsor, the issue of several illegal activities in the area or within the territory of Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. To cite some, one is about oil smuggling. To trace it back, the discovery of 51 million liters of petrol and diesel oil in Subic Bay Free Port. The report was revealed in June 28, 2007. Another issue is the filing of the case against the firm Tri Solid for failing to liquidate at least 138 million liters of oil worth P3 billion out of Subic Bay Free Port. In fact, then Usec. Antonio Villar, head of the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group, filed the cases of economic sabotage, violation of Customs and Tariff Code, and falsification of documents. This report was done on July 11, 2007. As of this time, I do not know if this case prospered. In fact, the House of Representatives, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, investigated a syndicated smuggling of refined fuel which translates into a yearly tax loss of P803 million to P16 billion, and this report was revealed last April 5, 2009.

Let me go to the occurrence of rice smuggling, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. May I immediately make a comment on that, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SALCEDA. It is already in the Court of Tax Appeals, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. A case has been filed by the Bureau of Customs. So it is now pending in the Court of Tax Appeals where the BOC questioned the importer and was slapped or imposed with penalties.

We can now go to the issue on rice smuggling, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Does it mean that the case was just dismissed, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. It is still with the Court of Tax Appeals, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Okay. Thank you for that answer, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague.

May I proceed to another illegal activity in the area which is rice smuggling. In fact, this was investigated by no other than Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile on August 1, 2012. It is about the illegal importation of 420,000 bags of white Indian rice into the country via the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. Another is about Metro Eastern Trading Corporation and an Indian rice supplier Amira Foods India Ltd. represented by a certain Mr. Protik. They connived in an attempt to smuggle about P500 million worth of rice in April 2012.

Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague, an executive of Metro Eastern Trading Corporation, Cesar Bulaon, identified the SBMA official as Sr. Dep. Administrator for Trade and Investment Stefani Sano. Mr. Bulaon identified the other persons involved as Mr. Protik of Amira Foods India Ltd. and Bong Cuevas, later identified as Vicente Cuevas. This report came out last August 2, 2012.

The Senate cited in contempt two people allegedly involved in rice smuggling in Subic Bay Freeport Zone, such as Protik Guha of Amira Foods India and Cesar Ramirez, a resident of General Santos City. This report came out in September 4, 2012. Another issue, distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, is the issue at Customs which sued six Subic rice smugglers for bringing contraband from Vietnam. The following persons sued were: Jan Dexter Marfil, Board Member Editha Arzola, Board Member Jeaneth Espleta Vega, Director Gerardo Vega, Director William Quiophilag and Masagana Customs broker Mary Joy Sanchez. Then Customs Commissioner Ruffy Biazon said six were in violation of Sections 3601 and 3602, in relation to Sections 2503 and 2530 of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines. Biazon said the six were charged in an attempt to smuggle 20,000 bags of rice from Vietnam worth P30 million at the Subic Freeport Zone. He said the rice shipment were declared as gypsum board to avoid permit requirement. The report came out, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, last September 4, 2012.

The latest issue, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, is on a 50-meter fish carrier vessel used as a floating shabu laboratory in Subic, seized by authorities along the coast of Barangay Calapandayan, Subic, Zambales. This was discovered last July 11, 2016. Four Chinese nationals from Hong Kong were arrested,

namely: Shu Fook Leung, Kwok Tung Chan, Wing Fai Lo and Kam Wah Kwok.

Chief Supt. Bert Ferro of the PNP Anti-Illegal Drugs Group head said that it is possible that the floating shabu laboratory may have manufactured and delivered around 180 kilos of shabu in Claveria, Cagayan. The shabu laboratory was said to be capable of producing 25 kilos a day and nearly half a kilo of shabu with a market value of P2.2 million.

Why am I citing this, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor? It is because this happened within the area of the SBMA.

REP. SALCEDA. Isa-isahin po natin, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

Iyong Amira po ay nabenta na ng Customs. Nandito po si Ruffy Biazon. Na-auction ito at kumita ang gobyerno ng P800 million.

Ang pangatlo po, kapangalan lang, municipality of Subic. For people who have been to Subic, it is right within Olongapo City, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, and not within the jurisdiction of the Subic Port or the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. It is just a small town of Subic.

For the P30 million Vietnam rice, a case has been filed and it was seized by the Customs Bureau. Doon sa una, ang nasabit na SBMA personnel has been charged already in court, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you very much for those answers, Mme. Speaker.

Will the Sponsor concede to this Representation, Mme. Speaker, that indeed, there were several illegal activities that happened within the area of Subic Bay?

REP. SALCEDA. Kapag freeport kasi, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, kailangan po talaga ng ingat para ang domestic producers ay hindi naman nadedehado. Tulad ng farmers namin sa Bicol, kung papapasukin ang murang bigas ng Vietnam o ng India, kawawa po kami. Kung imbes na P32 ay nagiging P24 ang presyo, nawawalan sila ng P6. Samakatuwid, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, ang Subic ay may 16 na abogado, 100 ang kanilang enforcers at 800 ang kanilang pulis.

Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, structurally, Subic is fully cognizant of its proper role in the Philippine economy. There is supposed to be a freeport. Just imagine an island somewhere in the Pacific and call it Subic Bay. They can go there and invest, but they have to employ Filipinos. That is Subic, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

Nagkataon ang Subic ay nasa loob ng ating island of Luzon, katabing-katabi. Therefore, the temptation na padaanin doon ang hindi dapat nandoon din. Kaya ang kailangan doon ay ang political will ng administrator.

Pangalawa, ang resources nito mismo kung saan merong 800 police enforcers out of the 2,500 officials ng Subic, plus 16 na mga abogado. Dapat siguro, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, damihan pa natin ang abogado.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you for that answer, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

With that, does the Sponsor believe, Mme. Speaker, that the office of the Chairperson or the management of the SBMA plays a direct role in curbing these illegal activities in the area?

REP. SALCEDA. Sa tingin ko po, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, may tiwala ako dahil kilalang-kilala ko ang bagong pasok na chairman. Ang buong buhay niya nilatag upang maproteksyonan at maisulong ang kagalingan, ang welfare ng kanyang barangay. Siyempre, para labanan ang korapsyon at krimen hindi lang sa kanya paligid, pati na sa buong bansa bilang head ng VACC. Kaya po, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, all the concerns of the Gentleman, halos sinagot na ng kaniyang pinanggalingan, ang Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, kagaya ng shabu, corruption at rice smuggling from India and Vietnam.

Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, para sa akin, one particular expertise, lalung-lalo na ang Subic na dapat maproteksyonan bilang crown jewel of investments ng Pilipinas, kasi puwede nating panlaban ito dahil may airport, may deep seaport pa, gitnang-gitna ang location at well-built na ang mga imprastruktura, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker. Sa tingin ko, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, ang ating bagong Chairman, ang buong balangkas o structure at organization ng Subic ay tested na rin po. Dumaan na rin sila sa hindi lang baptism of fire, kundi sa marani pang trials.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, for that assurance because awhile ago, there was a bit of question on the qualification of the newly appointed chair. With that assurance, we are to believe that the new chairperson of the SBMA is very much qualified for the position. Am I right, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. SALCEDA. Ang sabi ko nga po, crown jewel ang Subic on investment to the Philippines, and we will probably have more jewels once the new chair leaves Subic, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker. The crown rests sanely on the SBMA's chair.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Allow me then, Mme. Speaker, distinguished colleague, to proceed with the budgetary appropriation, proposed appropriation by Congress to the SBMA. How much is being appropriated?

REP. SALCEDA. It is P1.5 billion, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker. Pambayad lang po ng utang ng national government na inilagay sa Subic dahil Subic ang nakinabang noon. Ang Hanjin ay isang power subsidy which is one of the investors in the Philippines. Just one investment from the sixth-ranked ship builder in the whole world, nagkaroon tayo ng \$6 billion on our export. Salaries and wages na ibinigay sa mga Pilipino, na mga salaries and wages amounted to, as of end 2016, P29.97 billion. Nakapagbayad po ng buwis na P3 billion where its total investments sa Subic ay umabot ng \$2.3 billion. That was the entire investment in the Philippines, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, in 2014. Iyan ay isang investment lang po sa Subic na nagawa ng Hanjin.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Ang ibig po ba ninyong sabihin ay P1.7 billion Am I right, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. No, it is P1.5 billion, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). The P1.5 billion will just be used for payment and nothing from it will be taken for the operations of the SBMA. Am I right, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Diretso po itong pambayad sa pinagkaka-utangan natin, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So how much is the revenue generated by the SBMA, at least for 2015, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Ang figure po ng SBMA from rentals ay umabot sa P2.745 billion, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker. Noong nakaraang taon kumita sila ng P766 million.

REP. BRAVO (A.). How much is being remitted to the National Treasury, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Ang binayaran po last year ay P576 million, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, or more than half.

REP. BRAVO (A.). One-half, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Usually dapat 50 percent, Mme. Speaker. Kaso ang Chairman ay tao ng Presidente, kapag sinabi ng Presidente huwag lang 50 percent ang i-remit niya, ire-remit lahat kung kailangan. Pero siyempre kailangang maging sustainable ang ating enterprises like the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So the rest of the income is retained and used for its operations. Am I right, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Ang dami po nilang kailangang gawin para mapanatili or for its maintenance kasi dapat world-class. Sabi ko nga, it is the crown jewel of the Philippines. Para makalaban sa mundo ng kumpetisyon, ang ibang kita ay iniwan sa retained earnings. Nagagamit ito para sa maintenance, capital expenditures at kung kakailanganin nang expansion sa ibang mga pasilidad sa loob ng Subic na kung minsan hinihingi ng investor. Immediately naman dahil kayang gawin nagagawa agad. Iyan naman ang kagandahan sa isang GOCC katulad ng SBMA dahil po nakaka-respond sila kaagad-agad para po mga pangangailangan ng mga investor na sila naman ang nagbibigay ng trabaho para gawin naman natin.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you very much for that very detailed answer from the good Sponsor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. Pasensiya na at sumobra yata ako, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So the use of income can be utilized for Personnel Services, MOOE and Capital Outlay. Am I right, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. BRAVO (A.). That is including Personnel Services? What is the status now of the Salary Grade of our employees? Do they enjoy the Salary Standardization Law, in level 4?

REP. SALCEDA. Sa Salary Standardization Law IV po ba, Mme. Speaker?

REP. BRAVO (A.). So they are covered by that scheme, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi po sila GOCG, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Sorry.

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi po sila GCG. They are SSL IV, for compliant.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, they enjoy the same, with the rest of the government employees.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, like us.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Mayroon bang Intelligence Fund ang SBMA?

REP. SALCEDA. Wala po.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Wala. Even before? No history?

REP. SALCEDA. Pinatangal po doon sa kabila.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, dati mayroon.

REP. SALCEDA. Mayroon po. Kailangan mo po iyan para mawala ho ang mga smugglers. Kung you are so minded, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, we can approve their COB, their corporate operating budget, at lagyan po natin para mas magawan ng SBMA para po mawala ang smuggling, mga contraband entry at para po mapanatili ang SBMA. Para huwag na nating hintayin ang enforcement, gawin nating preventative measures. Ang kailangan po diyan is an intelligence surge para po magawa ng SBMA o mapanatili ng SBMA ang kanyang pagiging competitive bilang isang freeport zone.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, ang paniniwala po ng distinguished Sponsor, hindi kailangan ang Intelligence Fund.

REP. SALCEDA. Kailangan na kailangan po.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Kailangan?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, what is your proposition? Because, I believe, if it is needed, then, might as well reinstate it.

REP. SALCEDA. Puwede po ...

REP. BRAVO (A.). If it is needed.

REP. SALCEDA. ... at the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Pag inaaprubahan na natin, may mga individual and committee amendments po, puwede ninyo itong idaan kay Chairman Nograles, or you can just submit, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, to the Committee that will handle individual and collective amendments, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, so that we can properly put, enable—huwag naman nating utus-utusan, tapos hindi mo naman binibigyan ng pamasaha, paano makakapagtrabaho? Kaya, tama po, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, ako ay agree na agree sa sinabi ninyo, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). So, will the distinguished Sponsor, be supportive of the amendment in the period of amendment that such provision be reinstated?

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po iyan, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, para wala na hong smuggling. Kasi

mamaya niyan magkaroon po ng alibi, “wala ho kasing intel kaya po nakapasok.” Although, they have 800 policemen, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, I have never seen one-third of the entire management bureaucracy are enforcers, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. So, you can just immediately see why Subic is so competitive, the most competitive freeport zone in the Philippines.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you very much for that very much detailed answer, comprehensive enough that I am also supportive of reinstating the Intelligence Fund, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SALCEDA. Magkano ang gusto mo, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. BRAVO (A.). We can ask the newly appointed Chair, how much is needed and we will support. How much?

REP. SALCEDA. Alam mo, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, iyong tinanggal po noon, mga five, gawin nating 10.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Ten billion.

REP. SALCEDA. No, million, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Million.

REP. SALCEDA. Kasi, P2.7 billion lang naman po ang kanilang earnings from rentals and other earnings po ng SBMA.

REP. BRAVO (A.). I am very much supportive of the proposal coming from the distinguished Sponsor.

REP. SALCEDA. Salamat po, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. It is duly noted by the Secretariat. Charged po iyon sa iyo, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Thank you very much, Mr. Sponsor.

On behalf of the Minority, there being no other member who wishes to ask a question, I move for the termination of the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of SBMA. I do so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of SBMA. I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority is hereby terminated.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SAVELLANO. Mme. Speaker, before we proceed, may we acknowledge the presence of our guests from the Bases Conversion and Development Authority, headed by the President and CEO, Vivencio B. Dizon; Clark Development Corporation, Noel Mananquil.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Officers of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority and their staff are hereby welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Floor Leader is recognized.

BASES CONVERSION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

REP. SAVELLANO. Mme. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of interpellation and debate. I move that we begin the consideration of the budget of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. SAVELLANO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Second District of Albay, the Hon. Joey Sarte Salceda, to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Joey Sarte Salceda is recognized to sponsor the budget of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority.

REP. SALCEDA. Ready to answer questions, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SAVELLANO. Mme. Speaker, may we recognize Representative Ariel “Ka Ayik” B. Casilao of the ANAKPAWIS Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Ariel “Ka Ayik” B. Casilao is recognized.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Floor Leader. Will the Gentleman from Albay yield to some policy clarificatory questions?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. In the last, in the previous budget briefing and even in the pre-plenary, this Representation asked for certain documents of the BCDA, that this Representation be furnished, be apprised of the list of the bases that are under several partnerships, private-public partnerships. However, the Department of National Defense furnished this Representation, but a very limited listing. Now, may I, again, inquire from the good Sponsor the current bases undergoing private-public partnerships.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SALCEDA. May I seek, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. May I ask for one-minute suspension of the session?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is suspended.

It was 3:28 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:29 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is resumed.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you. After conferring, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, with the top management of the BCDA, there are three keys: Fort Bonifacio – 150 hectares, with Ayala Land and Greenhills Property or Evergreen, the Yao Campos Group; and the Clark Green City – 280 hectares and their PPP-private partner is Filinvest Land and Villamor Airbase; and Megaworld, for 30 hectares, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Yes, please provide this Representation the ...

REP. SALCEDA. The contracts.

REP. CASILAO. ... listing, documents. Now distinguished Sponsor, you made mention of the Clark Green City. May I request now to present some pictures that I have. (*Presentation of pictures*)

Yes, that one. This is in Clark. According to our chapter, the leaders who complained with this office, the BCDA requested several fully armed personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, together with heavy equipment. As you can see, these are rice lands. These are farm areas of our poor farmers whose source of livelihood is very dependent on.

Now, just last week, this happened even without a certification from the Department of Agrarian Reform that these areas that were converted were included in the Clark Green City development.

Now, may I know from the distinguished Sponsor, from the leadership of the BCDA, have you instructed or can you confirm that you gave an instruction for the development and the destruction of this agricultural area?

REP. SALCEDA. Number one, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, the military reservations are not covered by agrarian reform, I suppose. Second, the road project is a road project of the DPWH, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, but, of course, it was requested by the Clark Development Corporation and the BCDA.

REP. CASILAO. Yes. However, let us just say that it is under exempted provisions within the CARP and the CARPER. But what is the plan for the BCDA for the affected farmers with respect to their livelihood and their living condition?

REP. SALCEDA. May I confer, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, so I can give you better clarity, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, what will the BCDA do for the displaced farmers, Your Honor.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SALCEDA. May I ask for a one-minute suspension of the session, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is suspended.

It was 3:32 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:33 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is resumed.

REP. SALCEDA. They have already released, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, P40 million but the budget for the affected farmers is P400 million, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. So, there is a deficit.

REP. SALCEDA. Of course, Your Honor, that is only a partial payment or, you know, as the Department pays the BCDA and as they clear the rice land, it is like a completion-basis compensation, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Yes.

REP. SALCEDA. But certainly, Your Honor, I can tell the BCDA to just comply, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, I think, with the agreement with displaced farmers, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, and just pay the P400 million.

REP. CASILAO. Well, distinguished Sponsor, it is sad to note that while there is a plan for development, they included the specific areas where the farmers reside and the source of their livelihood is present because of the government's intention to include them in private-public partnership and make use of the land for commercial, industrial, and even for high-end residential purposes at the expense of our farmers and their livelihood. Again, this Representation manifests that whatever the intention of the BCDA should be incorporated in evaluating and considering the very interest and welfare of our farmers and the indigenous peoples. There had been complaints also from the indigenous people, the Aetas, who will be affected by the Clark Green City Project. So, let it be put on record, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, that this Representation will continue to question and will continue to oppose. We are not against development, but the question is whether this development will serve the interest and welfare of the farmers, the indigenous people residing in the area or for the interest of the big business corporations behind the Clark Green City.

That will be all, Mr. Sponsor. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Just a matter of response. I think the affected farmers will have first priority in employment because this project will have employment opportunities; and number two, Mme. Speaker, ayaw naman siguro, otherwise, they have to change the name if they oppress farmers and indigenous people. It cannot be a Green City. Makakarma po sila, Your Honor.

So, I guess, that is all, Mme. Speaker. And thank you very much to the honorable Gentleman from the ANAKPAWIS Party List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SAVELLANO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, the Hon. Jose "Lito" L. Atienza Jr.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Jose "Lito" L. Atienza is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Floor Leader.

Again, with the kind indulgence of the Sponsor, we just would like to be clarified as to the main function of this agency now, the Bases Conversion and Development Authority. Ano po ba ang mga bases still to be converted?

REP. SALCEDA. Well, essentially, Mme. Speaker, Clark, Subic, Villamor, and I guess, Your Honor, those identified by the Asset Privatization Trust or the Cabinet, Mme. Speaker. The President can identify because the proceeds are earmarked for AFP modernization, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. So, it is a fact that the bases are still scheduled to be converted today and, if so, ano-ano po bang bases ito?

REP. SALCEDA. Mme. Speaker, dalawa na lang po ang major na natitira, Crame at Aguinaldo. So far, Your Honor, I do not hear, or there are no firm plans, Mme. Speaker, although there are always reports, there are always offers, but, I guess, Your Honor, that right now what is on the plate essentially are Subic, Clark, and Villamor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. As of now, could the Gentleman Sponsor give us an idea as to how much, a round figure, have been raised through the Bases Conversion effort.

REP. SALCEDA. P73 billion, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Magkano po?

REP. SALCEDA. P73 billion has been remitted to the DND for their AFP modernization, Mme. Speaker, to the Treasury, for appropriation, for their trust fund for AFP modernization.

REP. ATIENZA. I beg your pardon. Hindi ko pa nakuha iyong ...

REP. SALCEDA. Seven-three.

REP. ATIENZA. P73 billion.

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Saan po napunta itong perang ito? Again, just general principle, Mme. Speaker. Kasi, baka po gastos tayo nang gastos dito sa opisina ng ito ay wala na po namang maibebentang bases.

REP. SALCEDA. Ang nai-remit na po, Mme. Speaker, between May 1993 to August 2016 sa AFP ay P30.78 billion. Tapos po, iyong BCDA share para naman po continuous ang development, katulad halimbawa ng sa Clark, ay mayroon pong iniwan na P19 billion. Iyong share ng mga beneficiary-agencies ay P7.9 billion; direct expenditure in the disposition is P6.4 billion; taxes, duties and fees – P6.88 billion; non-military replication expenses – P680 million; LGU share, I guess this is RPT – P580 million; and, may natitira pong P1 billion for disposition po ng gobyerno for distribution.

REP. ATIENZA. Are we to understand that this money, these estimates have gone into the Treasury and properly disposed of to the intended beneficiaries?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, Your Honor. Actually it appears in our BESF, it is somewhere po in our annual...

REP. ATIENZA. So, for 2017, Mme. Speaker, may we ask the Gentleman ...

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SALCEDA. May I ask for one-minute suspension, Your Honor, so we can address the question of the Gentleman from BUHAY.

REP. ATIENZA. Gladly, Madam Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. The session is suspended.

It was 3:41 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:44 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The session is resumed.

REP. SALCEDA. I hope I can share this with you after the question and answer so you would have—we can be more—para mas makita ninyo po kung nasaan po sa ating mga, Volume 3 ba ito?

Basically, Your Honor, nandito po, for last year, P4.5 billion, and this year po, P4.5 billion, and P4 billion next year, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Mayroon po kayong listing?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyon po bang mga conversion in the past, lahat po ito ay cash exchanges for the property of the government, the buyer pays in cash or installment?

REP. SALCEDA. Cash po iyon. Ang nangyari po inuutay-utay po ng DBM po iyong pag-release. In other words, ini-income na nila kasama po doon sa ating revenue, pero po, iyong pag-appropriate po para po sa AFP modernization, inuutay-utay po. So, iyong paano po nagamit—although they are earmarked for AFP modernization, but the releases are essentially po, ano—so, katulad iyong ngayon na 4.5, 4.5, 4.5 na sinasabi, ...

REP. ATIENZA. Oo.

REP. SALCEDA. Ito po ay iyong pagbabayad po niyan, cash po iyong binibigay po noong ating mga PPP partners, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Therefore, to give us an idea, a better grasp of how the country benefits from this agency, could you give us an idea on how much was paid for the Bonifacio Global City area, per square meter average?

REP. SALCEDA. Your Honor, nasa stock market pa ako noon, e. So, patay na patay pa po iyong market noon, so mga nasa 36,000 ...

REP. ATIENZA. Naiintindihan po natin iyon, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. Thirty-seven thousand po.

REP. ATIENZA. But we have to have an idea on how they perform their functions because they keep on getting funds from the national government and they keep on generating cash in their transactions. We just want to be convinced that it is a justified agency to continue existing, or they can probably terminate their functions, considering that there may no longer be areas to be converted. Like, for instance, we would like to ask, ano po ba ang naka-schedule for conversion in 2017? Again, sabi ninyo, cash payments lahat iyan, so wala na pong collectible.

REP. SALCEDA. Iyong sinabi ko po kanina na P71 billion, totally cash po iyon. Kasi, hindi naman po nila ini-income dito po sa ating GAA, unless cash po iyan. Wala pong accrual basis po tayo. Pero po,

iyong operation po nila, katulad doon sa Bonifacio, P30 billion po in-income po natin noong mga 1995, 1996. Pero po, iyong iba po ay joint venture with PPP partners po. So, iyong 45 percent po na mga babayaran po will come from the joint venture or the Joint Development Agreement po with the partner po natin.

REP. ATIENZA. So, again, for 2017, honorable Sponsor, mayroon po bang naka-schedule na iko-convert pa, and give us an idea, anu-ano po ito para po naman makita natin ang benepisyo na ibinibigay nitong ahensiya sa ating pamahalaan at sa ating mamamayan?

REP. SALCEDA. Unang- una po, ...

REP. ATIENZA. Can you mention it or you do not have an idea?

REP. SALCEDA. Wala po ngayon this year. Wala po between now, Sir, there are no pronouncements from the Executive as to their predisposition towards the other remaining military assets, Your Honor. What they ...

REP. ATIENZA. So, therefore, the agency cannot say what they will generate in 2017.

REP. SALCEDA. They do, Your Honor, because they have joint venture agreements, Your Honor, like Clark, iyon po ay kumikita from rentals, Your Honor, from lease. At pangalawa po, may bago po silang joint venture with Filinvest sa pag-develop po noong 180-hectare Clark Green City po. So, we can scrutinize, Your Honor, at the appropriate venue, iyong details. Iyong how the government will, essentially, financially—what are the financial benefits accruing to us as owner of the lot or of the land, and para makita po natin kung—para mas makita po natin iyong benepisyo. At ang Clark po ay nandoon para i-manage po iyong mga asset na ito katulad—ang BCDA nandoon po para i-manage po iyong isang asset katulad po ng Clark at saka iyong mga natitirang joint venture partnership po sa Fort Bonifacio at sa Villamor.

REP. ATIENZA. So, Clark continues to be privatized at this point. That is what you are saying.

REP. SALCEDA. Lease lang po, e, long-term lease lang po ang mga ...

REP. ATIENZA. Ah, long-term lease.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. Opo. Puwede po bang makakuha ng summary of the Clark transactions from the start of the agency's existence and up to now ...

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. ... and projected future, near future, so we can immediately accept the fact that this agency has not fulfilled its functions, therefore, it has to continue.

Iyong Clark po has to continue.

Iyong Clark po ay napakalaking area niyan, hindi po ba?

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po.

REP. ATIENZA. E, gusto nating malaman, completely ...

REP. SALCEDA. As a matter ...

REP. ATIENZA. Completely privatized, magkano po ba expected out of Clark?

REP. SALCEDA. Ang Clark po ay 4,400, so trillion po kung less 30 percent free space, kaso po, undeveloped land. So, 4,400 times 70 percent, so, that would be about 3,000 hectares, Mme. Speaker, developable land. At kung hindi po lease, ibenta natin. Tingin ko naman, Mme. Speaker, we can secure at least a million per hectare. So, you get 3,000 times one—malaki pong—pero kaya nga po mayroon po tayong BCDA, CDC, SBMA, para ma-manage po ito, para iyong gobyerno po ay—iyong future generations ng mga susunod na Pilipino, makikinabang din po dito sa development. So, we can grow these assets, Mme. Speaker. So, that is why, that is principally, Mme. Speaker, the job of the BCDA and Clark, and SBMA is to grow these assets so that they can maximize or they can optimize the benefits, not just for us, but for the next generations, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. That is exactly what we are trying to assure ourselves, that all of these will redound to the benefit of the present generation and future generations. The size of Clark, for instance, can be assured probably the next budget for the Philippines if we really conscientiously see to it that every square inch of land in that area goes to the Treasury.

So, bigyan po ninyo kami ng idea, in summary, ano na po ang nangyari sa Clark? Ano po ang nangyayari ngayon? At ano po ang ine-expect nating mangyayari sa 2017?

We do not expect you to be ready with that, Mme. Speaker. We would appreciate it if this document can be given to us before we finally approve the budget of the Administration, including that of the Bases Conversion.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mme. Speaker, the BCDA and Clark will make a presentation to you, Mme. Speaker, and ...

REP. ATIENZA. Isa na lang pong tanong.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mayroon pong component ng housing ang bawat bases converted, hind po ba?

REP. SALCEDA. Mayroon pong ...

REP. ATIENZA. Housing. Pabahay.

REP. SALCEDA. Mukhang ang alam ko, dati, housing sila. Kinonvert ito into commercial use and industrial use.

REP. ATIENZA. Mayroon po bang housing component, wala po?

REP. SALCEDA. May mga dormitory po, I am sure, Mme. Speaker, iyong iba po na

REP. ATIENZA. Katulad sa Bonifacio, mayroon pong housing component iyan e. Naibigay po ba iyon? Happy po ba ang ating mga military men who got benefits out of that project?

REP. SALCEDA. May master plan po iyan na nasusunod po kung saan po iyong-- para walkable po iyong work space at saka iyong ano para—kaya nga po Clark Green City ang pinakamalaki nilang proyekto, para po naman hindi lang dahil renewable industries ang nandoon, kung hindi mismo po na ito ay walkable, liveable space, para ibig sabihin po, definitely, mayroon pong mga dormitory o housing para po doon sa mga magta-trabaho sa loob ng Clark Green City, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. So, again, Mme. Speaker, we would appreciate it if you can include the Bonifacio project as a whole. Nasaan na po ba tayo roon? We continue to receive information that we would like to clarify and remove from our table, na everything is going perfectly as planned as far as Bonifacio is concerned. Then, at Clark, we would appreciate it if you include in your summary report the actual plan of development for the area, ...

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. ... para makita po natin, hindi ito tingi na kung ano ang maisip ngayon, iyon ang gagawin. Mayroong total development plan dapat iyan, hindi po ba?

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po.

REP. ATIENZA. Being a planner, yourself, Mme. Speaker, we would be assured of the full benefits of the program and the projects, if there is a definite development plan that they are following and not just a whimsical decision on a case-to-case basis dahil doon po talaga malulugi ang gobyerno kung wala po noong planong ganoon.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po.

REP. ATIENZA. So, we would expect the summary of the Bonifacio ...

REP. SALCEDA. The housing component.

REP. ATIENZA. ... and the Clark projects with the corresponding development plan for Clark Field.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. We would appreciate that, Mme. Speaker.

That satisfies our questions for today, and we would like to wish the BCDA all the best for a successful endeavor in their task of privatizing bases in the country.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Maraming salamat po.

REP. SALCEDA. Salamat po, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. I move for a brief suspension, Mme. Speaker

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. The session is suspended.

It was 3:56 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:59 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Ferdinand L. Hernandez presiding.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

REP. SAVELLANO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Minority Floor Leader from the Third District of Quezon, the Hon. Danilo E. Suarez.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The distinguished Gentleman from Quezon, the Minority Floor Leader, Representative Suarez, is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Distinguished Sponsor, minor interpellation.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Who is the head now of the BCDA?

REP. SALCEDA. May I ask him to stand up, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. My good friend.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, I know you know him, but you cannot see him.

REP. SUAREZ. Parochial questions lang, because I frequent these places, distinguished Sponsor. What is the total acreage now of the BCDA?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SALCEDA. Kanya-kanya po. Ang Clark po ay 4,400; ang Villamor ay—650 po ang Bonifacio; John Hay is 680.

May I ask for a one-minute suspension, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is suspended.

It was 4:01 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:03 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I understand that the BCDA still has a property inside the Bonifacio Global City. Is that correct?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, that is right.

REP. SUAREZ. And still it has a property in the Navy Officers' Village, 25 hectares inside. Does that include the marine reservation, Your Honor?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Is this office self-sustaining? Can they survive on their own revenue?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, Your Honor. Kumikita po sila at nagbibigay po

REP. SUAREZ. Though technically, they may or they may not want to seek appropriation from Congress.

REP. SALCEDA. Pambayad po noong utang again, Your Honor, ng TI, Texas Instruments, iyong power subsidy po, kaya po sila nandito dahil isinubo po natin iyon para po iyong TI ay hindi lilipat sa ibang countries noong global economic crisis noong 2008, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. I just would like to give a simple homily to your principal, distinguished Sponsor. You campaigned heavily for the candidacy of then elected President, President Duterte. Do I understand it right? Siguro naman nakita ninyo at saka noong inyong kaibigan, si Sen. Alan Peter, iyong direksiyon ng ating Pangulo na mayroon siyang parang designated—kayo, mga trusted kayo, “Ayusin mo ang BCDA and let me solve the other problems of the country.” Napakalaki po ng responsibility, potential in terms of investment in this area.

I hope you can come up with some efforts to make it attractive to investment, Mr. Sponsor, to your principal.

REP. SALCEDA. Makakaasa po kayo. Iyan po ang sinabi sa akin ng akin pong principal.

REP. SUAREZ. Wala ho kayong problema doon sa existence noong mga air force bases, naval bases?

REP. SALCEDA. Wala po.

REP. SUAREZ. Harmonious kayo. And you pay your own consumption—power, water—kanya-kanya po silang bayad.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, tapos na po iyong—next year po ...

REP. SUAREZ. Iyon po bang natitira ninyong property will be subject to the modernization of the Armed Forces?

REP. SALCEDA. Iyong kapag naibebenta po, naibenta or lease po, nai-earmark ...

REP. SUAREZ. No. What I am saying is that you still have about several acreages here in the Global City. If you decided to sell this, will you give a portion to the modernization of the Armed Forces?

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po iyon, Your Honor. Iyong buong—pati nakapagbigay na po sila ng P72 billion for AFP modernization.

REP. SUAREZ. May bakante pa ho na puwedeng bilhin?

REP. SALCEDA. Mayroon pa ho. Pero, kaso may master—sa Bonifacio po, may 100 hectares pa po.

REP. SUAREZ. What is the line of thought of the new head of the agency, lease or outright purchase?

REP. SALCEDA. Tingin ko, Your Honor, mayroon silang parang optimization rule. Unang-una, siyempre you try to maximize the cash returns of the government pero pambalanse lang po na hindi lang iyong generation ngayon ang dapat makinabang. So, it is a combination of lease, joint venture and outright sale.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, I would respect the wisdom of the new head of the agency.

I would like to congratulate him for his appointment. Sana huwag ninyong makalimutan, Danilo Suarez po, taga-Quezon, Congressman, Third District.

REP. SALCEDA. Hinding-hindi ko po makakalimutan si Danilo Suarez at ang kanyang anak na gobernador.

REP. SUAREZ. Salamat po.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minority, we have no more questions to raise, so I move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the BCDA.

I so move.

Do you have attached agencies, distinguished Sponsor? Mr. Speaker, the distinguished Sponsor is not listening. *(Laughter)*

REP. SALCEDA. I am listening, Your Honor, but the host-Congressman of the ...

REP. SUAREZ. I would just like to correct myself. Do they have attached agencies? None.

REP. SALCEDA. Subsidiary lang po, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. I reiterate my motion, Mr. Speaker. I move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the BCDA.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SAVELLANO. On behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). There is a joint motion from the Majority and the Minority to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the BCDA.

Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the period of interpellation and debate on the BCDA budget is hereby terminated.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Before we proceed, Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Antonio L. Tinio and Hon. France L. Castro. This is the Lärarförbundet delegation. This is a Swedish Teachers' Union. They are: Sara Sundström, National Executive Board; Sandra Axelsson, National Executive Board also; Ann-Charlotte Gavelin Rydman, likewise from the National Executive Board; Pia Rizell, National Executive Board; Anders Åhlin, National Secretary; and, Joaquim Olsson, International Secretary.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The guests of Representatives Tinio and Castro may please rise to be recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. I move for a brief suspension of the session, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is suspended.

It was 4:10 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:12 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the President of the Credit Information Corporation, Jaime P. Garchitorea.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The official of the Credit Information Corporation, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

CREDIT INFORMATION CORPORATION

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we begin the consideration of the budget of the Credit Information Corporation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). There is a motion. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

Please proceed.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Second District of Albay, Cong. Joey Sarte Salceda, to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Credit Information Corporation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The distinguished Gentleman from Albay, Representative Salceda, is recognized to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of Credit Information Corporation.

REP. SALCEDA. Ready to answer questions, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize our Minority Leader, Cong. Danny Suarez, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The distinguished Gentleman from Quezon, the Minority Leader, Representative Suarez, is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Distinguished Sponsor, how much is your principal asking for?

REP. SALCEDA. Twelve.

REP. SUAREZ. Twelve?

REP. SALCEDA. Million, P12 million.

REP. SUAREZ. Why do they need P12 million?

REP. SALCEDA. Because they are recently constituted, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, and we need to promote credit consciousness or the ability of our enterprises and individuals to get credit rating.

So, in short, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, they are in that organic phase wherein—but at a certain point, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, they will make money because credit rating—you need to get rated for the banks to lend you, whether it is credit card, whether it is—even, I suppose, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, your credit worthiness is needed when you try to raise money from the financial markets, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. For such a mammoth or gargantuan task you are only asking P12 million.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, because they are just starting. But I think they will grow big, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, because it is—but in other economies, organizations such as this, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, they are actually private.

REP. SUAREZ. Is this office—who will be—is this under the Office of the President or Trade or Department of Finance?

REP. SALCEDA. DOF po, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. DOF.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. SUAREZ. Your principals have been to my office and have briefed me about their task and their objective.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. And I said, for such a small amount I just said that maybe by next year, they can come up with a bigger allocation and magnify the purpose of their existence.

REP. SALCEDA. I agree, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, because our MSMEs, our micro, small and

medium enterprises are hardly rated, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, and therefore, they cannot act while we are sitting on P3 trillion of savings in the formal sector. But our MSMEs are unable because they do not have credit rating, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. So, sometimes your credit rating is whether you can borrow and at what interest or risk premium they can give you. So, it is actually a very vital organization, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, which we can sell eventually.

REP. SUAREZ. Just my last question, which is rather parochial, I have Garchitorena friends from Bicol. Can you ask your principal if they are ...

REP. SALCEDA. They are from Bicol, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. They are from Bicol.

REP. SALCEDA. And I know them, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minority, there being no other members who would like to raise questions, I move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Credit Information Corporation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Credit Information Corporation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). There is a motion from the Majority and the Minority to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Credit Information Corporation.

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the CIC is hereby terminated.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move for a suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is suspended.

It was 4:18 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:26 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

The Deputy Speaker is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, before we proceed, may we acknowledge the presence of guests of Congressman Alex "AA" L. Advincula of the Third District of Cavite: Imus City Vice Mayor Arnel M. Cantimbuhan, Mr. Jefferson S. Bongat, and Mr. Dan Milson Dela Cruz.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). May the guests of Representative Advincula, please rise to be recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Floor Leader is recognized..

DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we begin the consideration of the budget of the Department of Agrarian Reform.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of our guests from the Department of Agrarian Reform, headed by Sec. Rafael "Ka Paeng" V. Mariano, (*Applause*) Usec. David D. Erro, Usec. Luis Meinrado C. Pañgulayan, Usec. Sylvia F. Mallari, (*Applause*), Usec. Rosalina L. Bistoyong (*Applause*) and Usec. Marcos D. Risonar Jr. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Secretary Mariano and the officials of the Department of Agrarian Reform, please rise to be recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from the Second District of Isabela, Rep. Ana Cristina Siquian Go, to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Department of Agrarian Reform.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*). The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

Representative Go is recognized to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Department of Agrarian Reform.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. GO (A.)

REP. GO (A.). Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my dear colleagues, today I present to you the proposed budget of the Department of Agrarian Reform for fiscal year 2017.

The DAR is the agency that implements the mandate of the State to promote comprehensive rural development and agrarian reform as stated in Article II, Section 21 of the 1987 Constitution. In pursuit of the State policy, the declared framework of the DAR under President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's administration is to defend and assert the rights of our farmers. So, for the Department of Agrarian Reform to perform their tasks and duties, this Sponsor would like to support the new appropriation for this Department, the amount of P9,801,201,000, for the consideration of this august Body, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Ariel "Ka Ayik" B. Casilao of the ANAKPAWIS Party-List for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. The distinguished Gentleman, Representative Casilao, is hereby recognized.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Magandang hapon sa Lady Sponsor. Will the Lady Sponsor yield to some policy questions?

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Una sa lahat po, ako, ang Representasyong ito ay natutuwa dahil sa kauna-unahang pagkakataon, ang ating Pangulo, Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte, ay nagtalaga ng isang Kalihim sa isang Departamento na nagmula sa kanyang uring pinagmulan. Si Kalihim, Secretary Paeng Mariano, o "Ka Paeng," hindi naman lingid sa inyong kaalaman ay dating Kinatawan din ng ANAKPAWIS Party-List. Bagamat sa kaniyang adbokasiya para sa pagpapatupad ng tunay na reporma sa lupa, siya ang itinalaga sa Departamentong ito at sa kauna-unahang pagkakataon, narinig natin at binuksan ang gate ng DAR para sa mga magsasaka, para sa lahat ng mga complaints, reklamo at adbokasiya nito.

Gayundin, sa mga iilang araw pa lang ng pag-upo ni Ka Paeng Mariano, binanggit na niya bilang isang policy direction ng Department of Agrarian Reform na sa kaniyang pamumuno, ang Departamentong ito ay

nakasisiguro na walang magsasakang mapapataksik sa kanilang lupang sinasaka.

Gayundin, ito ay batay sa mga pahayag ng ating Pangulo, pahayag ni Presidente Duterte sa mga nagdaang mga okasyon na kung saan siya ay sumusuporta para sa pagpapatupad ng tunay na reporma sa lupa. And in fact, for the record, distinguished Sponsor, last June 22, 2016, the President openly criticized that one of the failures of the land reform program was the reconcentration of some of the lands awarded to the farmer-beneficiaries, and in fact, there had been buy-backs. This resulted in several farmer-beneficiaries being deprived of the awarded CLOAs or CLPs.

Now, my first point, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor, is in the item of the subdivision of collective CLOA. This Representation believes, ito pong item ng subdivision of CLOA ay isang pamamaraan at isang naging easy way for the landlords affected or for the landlords subjected to land reform program to notice of coverage and eventually to the land acquisition and distribution, na ito iyong nagawang paraan din para manumbalik sa kanilang konsentrasyon. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I have been visiting several agrarian reform communities in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. They have the title but the physical possession of the awarded lands is under the hands of agricultural corporations.

Now, for the 2017 proposed budget of the Department of Agrarian Reform, in the item "subdivision of collective CLOA", it amounts to P284.6 million. I believe ito ay para sa natitirang coverage of the 866,000 hectares. Ito po ay binanggit ng ating Kalihim sa mga nagdaang budget briefing and even to the pre-pleinary presentation. Ngunit sa kabilang banda, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Sponsor, the utilization of the said item, the subdivision of CLOA, was only 30 percent in 2015 and even up to the present.

Now, dahil nga sa aming paniniwala at sa aming—we are worrisome of the budget allocation that it resulted in the disenfranchisement of agrarian reform beneficiaries. Will the lady Sponsor agree that to further, is it possible to maintain, since the utilization capacity of the DAR in implementing this item, the subdivision of collective CLOA, at the maximum, is only 30 percent? Will the Lady Sponsor agree that for the 2017 National Expenditure Program of the Department of Agrarian Reform for this item we will maintain that specific percentage?

REP. GO (A.). You were asking if it is possible for the rest, aside from the 30 percent of P85 million, the balance would be realigned.

REP. CASILAO. My first question, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, if you agree and with the due concurrence of the Department, is the utilization of the subdivision of CLOA only pegged at 30 percent?

REP. GO (A.). I do agree, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Since you have confirmed that, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, now, for the 2017, the P284.6 million, this Representation would like to seek the indulgence and the opinion of the Department if it is possible that, since the 30 percent utilization is only the maximum capacity, for 2017, P85 million for the subdivision of CLOA will be allocated and the remainder, the P199 million, will be transferred or realigned to other line items or to the legal services for the department.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GO (A.). Mr. Speaker, may I ask for a one-minute suspension of the session in order for me to ask our good Secretary.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The session is suspended.

It was 4:37 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:38 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

REP. GO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, for the information of the Body, we just could not realign the subject or the budget for our Department of Agrarian Reform, but then, there is a possibility that we can do it at a proper time, for the period of amendments. But for the sake of our interpellator, there have been suggestions coming from our good Secretary that we could realign the P50 million, yes, if it will be approved by Appro, that P50 million will be realigned under Technical Assistance (TAs). It would be technical assistance or support, yes, and another P148 million would be augmented for the documents and re-documentation of DNYD. That would be for distributed lands, but not yet documented.

REP. CASILAO. Yes. Totoo po iyan, Mme. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, because kamakailan lamang, noong nakaraang Sabado, kasama po ni Secretary Ka Paeng Mariano ang Kinatawang ito, at binisita namin ang Hacienda Luisita.

In fact, with the consultation of hundreds and even thousands of farmers who were there, nananatili

pa rin ang complaint, ang reklamo na they have been tilling the land but they have not been covered by the land reform program in the CARP and the CARPER. I think documentation, surveying and especially the legal services to be provided for this, not only for the agrarian reform beneficiaries but also for the farmers who are facing several litigations at the moment, will be helpful in pursuance of the objectives, the thrust and policy of the Department of Agrarian Reform in ensuring the land tenureship of our farmers.

For the second question, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, please ask our good Secretary for the development on the review, if there is any, of the DAR-DILG-DND Memorandum Circular No. 05 of 2002. Was there any review or does the good Secretary plan to abrogate the said memorandum circular? Because this Representation again has several complaints from our different constituencies and our chapters that because of this Memorandum Circular No. 05 of 2002, agrarian disputes are usually being militarized. These disputes should be solely under the adjudication of the Department of Agrarian Reform. However, because of this memorandum circular, the intervention of armed personnel from the Armed Forces of the Philippines has been sowing terror or atrocities, as I might say, to the farmer beneficiaries of the different communities—in San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan; two, in Capas, Tarlac and some other areas that I cannot mention at the moment, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP.GO (A.). Mr. Speaker, again, may I ask for a suspension of the session for this Representation to confer with the good Secretary.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is suspended.

It was 4:42 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:44 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

REP. GO (A.). Mme. Speaker, as stated by our good Secretary, there is an ongoing review. Also, they have actually had conferences, there have been workshops or consultations with the PNP and the DILG in order that they could form a workforce to help our farmers, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker. It would be a reassuring statement from the good Secretary as

relayed to the good Sponsor. Ako po ay tiwala naman na maisasakatuparan ng Departamentong ito na tunguhin ang misyon ng Department of Agrarian Reform, to ensure that under his watch, no farmers will be evicted from their farmlands.

Maraming salamat po. That would be all, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Cong. Tomasito "Tom" S. Villarín from AKBAYAN Party-List for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The distinguished Gentleman, Representative from AKBAYAN, the Hon. Tom Villarín is recognized.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the distinguished Sponsor from Isabela yield to some interpellations?

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. VILLARIN. I have no issue with the budget, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. What I just would like to propound is some convergence in policy pronouncements. Lately, President Duterte has said that there will be a moratorium on the conversion of agricultural lands. Is it now an avowed policy that there is a moratorium, and what would be the basis, the legal basis, of such a pronouncement, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. GO (A.). Based on what I know, still on an ongoing process right now, there is supposed to be an executive order coming from our President. But it has not been issued yet. But if the Gentleman would like this Representation to ask the good Secretary, perhaps I would have to ask for another suspension of the session.

REP. VILLARIN. Well if there is still no legal basis or order, but hopefully that policy would be coming out because that would, in effect, be favorable to the promotion of agrarian reform in our country. But coming as it may that this policy will become formalized within the DAR's target, how many landholdings, if ever the moratorium will become a policy, would have a legal basis; how much landholdings will be covered and distributed if there will be a moratorium? Is it in the pipeline now, Mr. Speaker?

REP. GO (A.). Based on the data coming from the Department of Agrarian Reform, around 60,000 hectares,

Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, have been converted. But to the effect of the land conversion moratorium, there is no new application.

REP. VILLARIN. In effect, there are 60,000 agricultural lands in the pipeline for conversion. But if this policy will be pushed, meaning, we would save 60,000 hectares of agricultural lands. Am I correct, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. GO (A.). No, Your Honor. Mr. Speaker, I would rephrase what I said.

The area to be converted is 60,963 hectares, and for the moratorium, only for new applications will be included or can form part of the moratorium, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. VILLARIN. Meaning, if there will be a moratorium, it will be insignificant because there are no lands for conversion.

REP. GO (A.). There are no new applications, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. VILLARIN. So there are no new applications, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. VILLARIN. Okay.

For land acquisition and distribution, and I think this is the main program of the DAR, we have, under the CARPER Program, more or less around 700,000 agricultural lands still to be covered. Some have the notice of compulsory acquisition or NCAs already issued. But for the 2017 Budget, how much of the targeted lands for acquisition are in the pipeline for next year?

REP. GO (A.). It is 95,000 hectares, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. VILLARIN. That is 95,000 hectares.

REP. GO (A.). Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the registration for the CLOA or the Certificate of Land Ownership Award is around 95,000 hectares. For the approved beneficiaries, that would be 101,964 farmers.

REP. VILLARIN. So with the existing budget, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, we can cover 95,000 hectares of land that can be paid for, meaning, because under the program, there is just compensation for these lands.

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. With the existing budget, it will cover the compensation for 95,000 hectares.

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, because it has to go through LandBank.

REP. VILLARIN. Yes, and 95,000 hectares, ranged with the 700,000 hectares of land still to be covered, that is still far from our target. Would that be correct, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, but right now only P100 million is included in our budget for LandBank because I also asked that question and I have been briefed that only P100 million will be given to LandBank because we still have money or the DAR still has money in the LandBank amounting to P4.5 billion for land acquisition.

REP. VILLARIN. So there is still an existing budget of P4.5 billion for land acquisition on top of the budget being requested for 2017?

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, P4.8 billion. I stand corrected, it is P4.8 billion in cash in the LandBank.

REP. VILLARIN. So that is P4.8 billion, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GO (A.). It came from the Marcos' wealth.

REP. VILLARIN. From the Agrarian Reform Fund.

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Agrarian Reform Fund, Your Honor.

REP. VILLARIN. Okay. As mentioned, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, that it is still a long way in terms of coverage, because we still have almost 700,000 hectares of private agricultural lands to be covered. Does the Sponsor think that within the next six years, the DAR can cover the remaining 600,000 hectares if it will cover 95,000 hectares this year, Mr. Speaker? Can DAR finish its land acquisition and distribution target within this administration?

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. This is the data coming from Department of Agrarian Reform. We have the 2016 target for land acquisition and distribution with the estimate for 2017 and beyond. The target for 2016, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, is 105,000 hectares; for 2017, 95,000; for 2018, 100,000; and for 2019, another 100,000 hectares. The balance beyond 2019 would be 221,000 hectares.

REP. VILLARIN. I do have confidence in our good Secretary with such pronouncements that the agency can finish the land acquisition and distribution targets within the next six years.

Going to another point, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, another big problem is the second generation issue on agrarian reform. One major issue is the cancellation of the CLOAs. The cancellation of the CLOAs, which are supposed to be in the nature of a title, is similar in weight with the Torrens title. Will the DAR still entertain petitions for the cancellation of the CLOAs?

REP. GO (A.). Based on the answer of our good Undersecretary, Mr. Speaker, yes, it would still entertain any cancellation of the CLOA.

REP. VILLARIN. On what grounds would the cancellation be made, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. GO (A.). One, Mr. Speaker, would be the disqualification of the farmer-beneficiary, and the conversion, exemption and exclusion from our agricultural lands.

REP. VILLARIN. So, again, as what was mentioned, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, conversion is one ground.

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. As I pointed out earlier, Mr. Speaker, if we do have that moratorium, and I hope the President will issue that EO soon, because the CLOA is already the right of farmers, here comes the government giving away lands, but again getting back the lands through cancellation. I suppose the DAR will stand for the farmers, that cancellation of the CLOAs should not be a matter of priority. If ever the policy on the CLOA cancellation—because one of the problems is that when we talk about agrarian reform beneficiaries already given the CLOAs, most of them have children that also do not want to go to farming anymore—I think we should also take into consideration that the children of our ARBs are also capacitated, given support through scholarships in agriculture, so that they will not leave our farms, so that the farms would have a secure future for our agricultural sector.

On my last point, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, I would like to propose that the moratorium on conversion and the moratorium on the cancellation of the CLOAs be submitted to the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council as both priority policy measures. I hope the President, through our good Secretary, can make the PARC a regular council because in the past, it has not met even once a

year. Hopefully, the good Secretary can make representations with the President to make agrarian reform again a priority under this administration. That is an appeal, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, so that this program which has been almost a 30-year program can find its completion under this administration. That appeal and hope, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, can be heeded by our President.

That is all, distinguished Sponsor. Thank you for your time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GO (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Rest assured, we have our good Secretary who will handle our Agrarian Reform Program, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Again, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Minority Leader, the Gentleman from the Third District of Quezon, for his interpellation, if any.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The distinguished Gentleman from the Third District of Quezon, the Minority Leader, Representative Suarez is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Lady from Isabela be willing to yield to some difficult questions?

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is what I was about to say.

REP. SUAREZ. May I know the coverage of the land reform? What particular byproduct, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. GO (A.). Again, Your Honor, please.

REP. SUAREZ. What are the agricultural products that are covered by land reform?

REP. GO (A.). All crops, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Coconut, palay?

REP. GO (A.). Okay, you would like me to put it in details, Your Honor. Public and private agricultural lands, Your Honor, include, palay, coconut, sugar, banana and other agricultural products, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Sugarcane is not included, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. GO (A.). Sugarcane, yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. So, even vegetable, fruit farm, are included in the program.

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. May I know, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, in terms of acreage, this date, let us say end of—well, the good Secretary had been there for almost 90 days, so I would imagine that he must have an idea on how many beneficiaries do you have right now in terms of acreage.

REP. GO (A.). In terms of what, Your Honor?

REP. SUAREZ. Acreage, hectares, hectares.

REP. GO (A.). Ah hectareage, yes, Your Honor. We have 4.7 million hectares, Your Honor, benefiting 2.7 million agrarian reform beneficiaries, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. And this, we call families or individual persons?

REP. GO (A.). Individuals, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. So, at an average of five per family, you will say that you have about 400,000.

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. And, the budget being proposed is, how much budget is the Department asking for?

REP. GO (A.). P9.8 billion, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. The good Secretary has been an advocate of this problem and I would not question his dedication. All these years that we have been together, this is always an issue considering that in my district, there is still a good number of landed estates, and, we always consult each other on solutions and on tackling the issue. I just would like to find out, does the Secretary believe that this program should still continue?

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. May I know why.

REP. GO (A.). Your Honor, based on what we have discussed with the good Secretary, it is as simple as, we still have to work on 600,000 hectares, Your Honor, that could be given to our farmers, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. There is still enough land that have to be distributed.

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Your Honor, there are still lands that have to be distributed and that is amounting to...

REP. SUAREZ. On those 400,000 families that the good Lady has stated, and considering that you are involved in different agricultural crops, may we know the average income of each family in terms of individual cropping, like how much is the average income of a land reform beneficiary that is involved in palay?

REP. GO (A.). P70,000 per annum, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. P70,000 per annum?

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Your Honor, P70,000 per annum, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. That is way, way below the standard amount that is needed to have a decent life or a decent family, meaning, you have to send your children to school, attend to medical issues if someone gets sick. Kulang po iyon ano?

REP. GO (A.). I do believe, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Because if you are talking of P70,000, you are talking about maybe P5,000 something a month.

REP. GO (A.). A month, yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. That is more than the salary of our maid.

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Your Honor. That is why we have poor farmers, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. What is the forecast, what is the program? You are asking for P70 million and that may be a primary issue that the Department must address. How do you enhance the P70 million average considering that rice is a primary product? I do not want to hear how much is coconut because I am definitely sure coconut is lower.

REP. GO (A.). Based on the record, Your Honor, coming from the Department of Agriculture, it would be more on the ownership of lands, Your Honor, and also the technical support and trainings coming from the DAR, Your Honor—for new—yes.

REP. SUAREZ. Does the Department give assistance in terms of educational package or scholarship for land reform beneficiaries and hospital or medical assistance?

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Your Honor. There is ...

REP. SUAREZ. Can you identify some if you have any, very brief?

REP. GO (A.). They have agricultural enterprises and business development, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Can we have an estimate, ballpark figure? How many students are being supported or assisted by the Department?

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Your Honor, we have scholarship but not for 2016, Your Honor. But today, they have the intention to continue.

REP. SUAREZ. Just give me a ballpark figure of elementary to high school to college, how many?

REP. GO (A.). Only for college, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. How many?

REP. GO (A.). They have actually not engaged in scholarship for 2016, Your Honor, for this year.

REP. SUAREZ. No program for 2017?

REP. GO (A.). But for 2017, Your Honor, they intend to reactivate the program, Your Honor, to support scholars for agricultural— children of agrarian reform beneficiaries, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. This amount is higher or lower than the previous years.

REP. GO (A.). Which one, Your Honor, the budget?

REP. SUAREZ. You have a P 2,000 budget, they are asking budget for 2017.

REP. GO (A.). It is lower, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. So, binawasan po?

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Your Honor, by P330 million, Your Honor. It is around—yes, Your Honor, lower by P3.3 million that is around 3.3 percent, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Teka, nalilituhan lang po ako, distinguished Sponsor. My question is what they are asking for 2017 as compared to their present budget of 2016; how much are they asking for 2017? You have said they are asking for about P7 billion. Am I correct, Your Honor?

REP. GO (A.). No, Your Honor. They are asking for P9.8 billion, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. For 2017, magkano po ang budget nila for 2016?

REP. GO (A.). The 2016 budget is P10.3 billion, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. So, binawasan ho sila?

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Your Honor, lower by 3.3 percent.

REP. SUAREZ. Do we get any foreign assistance or help from international organizations in terms of this very noble agency?

REP. GO (A.). We have foreign-assisted projects, Your Honor, amounting to P2 billion, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. P2 billion?

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. And these are foreign-assisted. Are they grants or loans?

REP. GO (A.). They are loans, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Loans.

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Ultimately, they will have to be paid by the Philippine government.

REP. GO (A.). Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. I think the Lady is tired already having been standing there for a while.

So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minority, we do not have any more questions to raise ...

REP. GO (A.). Thank you, Your Honor, for being so kind.

REP. SUAREZ. ... on the proposed budget of the Department of Agrarian Reform. I move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate. I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. On behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Department of Agrarian

Reform and its attached agencies.

I so move, Mr. Speaker. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). There is a motion from the Majority and Minority to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Department of Agrarian Reform.

Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Department of Agrarian Reform is hereby terminated.

Congratulations.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SALO. May I move for a one-minute suspension of the session, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is suspended.

It was 5:11 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:21 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

DANGEROUS DRUG BOARD

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, may we move to consider the budget of the Dangerous Drugs Board.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. We move, Mr. Speaker, for the recognition of the Hon. Scott Davies S. Lanete, M.D. for his sponsorship of the budget.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The distinguished Gentleman, Scottie Lanete is hereby recognized.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

We are now ready to hear the interpellations on the Dangerous Drugs Board, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader.

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the honorable Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, Congressman Jose “Lito” L. Atienza Jr., for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The distinguished Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, Representative Lito Atienza, is hereby recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Floor Leader.

With the kind assistance of the honorable Sponsor, we would like to clarify certain matters with the Department of Health.

REP. LANETE. I am sorry, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. This is the—we are hearing the budget for the Dangerous Drugs Board, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, but if you wish to ask questions, we will be more than willing to answer.

REP. ATIENZA. Itutuloy ko na po, nandito na po ang DDB. Ang sabi sa akin DOH, pero itutuloy ko na po. Mayroon din akong simpleng tanong na masasagot naman agad nila e.

Noong 16th Congress po, pinuna ko ang budget ng Dangerous Drugs Board, napakaliit. Ito po bang taon na ito ay masasabi nating iyong budget na hinihingi nila ay sapat na sapagkat marami pong nangyari from the 16th Congress to the present? As we have pointed out, the Dangerous Drugs Board was ill-equipped and under-budgeted to be able to confront the problem of drugs in the country. True enough, if President Duterte did not come into the picture, our country would now be submerged—tayo po ay, sa palagay ko, papunta na sa kawalan because of the drug problem. But President Duterte has made it the centerpiece of his administration, so we are now facing a solution.

Now, may I ask the Dangerous Drugs Board if they would remember those particular sessions that we have had here. Every budget time, we would point out they did not have enough money to address the problem. So, I will ask the same question now, do they feel confident that what they are asking now will give them a better grasp, a better control of the drug situation in the country?

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, for the question.

As a matter of fact, the Dangerous Drugs Board has always been advocating new sets of policies and better research regarding our drug problem. This year, the Dangerous Drugs Board has a proposed P125-million budget. However, this still lacks around P21 million to cover the research as well as the other

policies that should be addressed, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. Because the Dangerous Drugs Board is very resourceful with their resources, they try to maximize everything and to be as effective as they should be. But with your kind support, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the Dangerous Drugs Board is asking for an increase of P21 million this year so that they could address head-on the drug problems in the country, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. We agree with that suggestion, and we will support any effort on the part of the DDB to ask for more money. Otherwise, we might as well abolish the agency. Katulad po ng pagpuna ko kanina roon sa naunang ahensiya, iyong Bases Conversion and Development Authority, kung wala na po silang ginagawa, i-abolish na lang natin. Kung itong Dangerous Drugs Board ay hindi rin po makapagbibigay ng resulta dito sa kampanya laban sa droga ay i-abolish na rin natin at ibigay na lang natin sa Office of the President lahat ng suporta. But if they feel that they can do a good job this time with no less than the President concerned, leading hands-on to the point of making enemies out of everybody, but we continue to support his efforts because the drug problem has really grown to monstrous proportions. Baka hindi na po natin makayanan ito kung hindi natin aasikasuhin. Ito po ba ay naririnig ng Dangerous Drugs Board ngayon?

REP. LANETE. Thank you.

With your kind indulgence, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, as much as the Dangerous Drugs Board is trying to address the solution, apparently, we have just seen the magnitude of the drug problem in the country, and that is why, as much as there is an increase in the budget of the Dangerous Drugs Board, but because the magnitude of the drug problem is even more and even higher than expected, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, then there should be an even bigger increase.

REP. ATIENZA. We would not go into any peso-and-centavo questioning because we know they need every centavo that can go their way. But we would like to point out that during the whole 2017, we will monitor what the Dangerous Drugs Board is doing. Kung sila naman ay nanonood na lang at hindi po naman sila nangunguna sa paglaban sa droga, we will move for its abolition, as I have said. Kung useless po ang ahensiya, useless gumastos ng maski isang sentimo kung wala na po silang ginagawa.

With that, I would like to terminate my clarificatory question because there is no need to scrutinize the budget of this agency, considering that they need every centavo that we can give them. Since we cannot increase the budget, I do not want to deduct a single centavo.

Maraming-maraming salamat po.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

Just to put things in perspective, the Dangerous Drugs Board will really rally to be the number one leading agency against the drug menace in the country, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Go ahead, distinguished Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ATIENZA. May we move for a one-minute suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. The session is suspended.

It was 5:28 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:29 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have gotten word that the Minority Leader is no longer going to interpellate. As we have already stated our position on the issue of the budget, so we move for the termination of—the Minority moves for the termination of the period of interpellation and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, before we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Dangerous Drugs Board, may we acknowledge the presence of the following resource persons: first is the Chairman of the DDB, Secretary Benjamin P. Reyes—okay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. With that, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Dangerous Drugs Board.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). There is a joint motion from the Majority and the Minority to

terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Dangerous Drugs Board.

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Dangerous Drugs Board is hereby terminated. Congratulations!

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SALO. I move for a one-minute suspension of the session, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. The session is suspended.

It was 5:31 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:31 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, we wish to acknowledge the presence of the following resource speakers or persons from the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency family. First is Director General Isidro S. Lapeña, Director Gladys F. Rosales, Director Randy R. Pedroso, and Ms. Maria Lourdes C. Jacosalem.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Director General Isidro “Tito Sid” Lapeña and the officials of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, please stand up. Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

PHILIPPINE DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

REP. SALO. With that, Mr. Speaker, we wish to open the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, we respectfully move to recognize Cong. Scott Davies S. Lanete to sponsor the budget of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The distinguished Gentleman, Rep. “Scottie” Scott Lanete, is recognized to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency will now be hearing the interpellations from the floor, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, I wish to, I move to recognize the honorable Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, Congressman Jose “Lito” L. Atienza Jr. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. The distinguished Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, Representative Lito Atienza, is hereby recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, at this point, the Minority takes the position that we would not want to talk about pesos and centavos again with the PDEA considering that they need all the help and support that we can give.

So, at this point, the Minority moves that we end the period of interpellation and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. On behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). There is a joint motion from the Majority and Minority to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency.

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency is hereby terminated. Congratulations. (*Applause*)

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SALO. I move for a one-minute suspension, of the session, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is suspended.

It was 5:34 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:34 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, we wish to acknowledge the presence of the following officials from the Department of Health family: Sec. Pauly Jean B. Rosell-Ubial, M.D.; Usec. Lilibeth C. David, M.D.; Usec. Achilles Gerard C. Bravo, M.D.; Usec. Roger P. Tong-an, M.D.; Usec. Gerardo V. Bayugo, M.D.; Usec. Herminigildo V. Valle, M.D.; and all of the DOH family.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Secretary Ubial and the rest of the officials of the Department of Health, please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*) The Floor Leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

REP. SALO. With that, Mr. Speaker, we wish to move for the consideration of the budget of the Department of Health.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Representative Scott “Scottie” Davis S. Lanete is hereby recognized to sponsor and answer questions on the budget of the Department of Health.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the interpellation of the Department of Health, we are now ready, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. Mr. Speaker, Representative Jose “Lito” L. Atienza of the BUHAY Party-List, we would like to move for the recognition of Rep. Lito Atienza of BUHAY Party-List for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The distinguished Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, Rep. Lito Atienza, is hereby recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Floor Leader.

Again, I am repeating what I said. We would appreciate it if the honorable Sponsor would clarify certain matters on the Department of Health’s budget and functions.

REP. LANETE. Yes, of course, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. To start with, we would like to ask the honorable Sponsor if he accepts the fact that the Department of Health's functions should have been devolved to the local government units as mandated by the Constitution. Is this happening? Will this happen soon? Or, ano po ba talaga ang mangyayari sa functions ng Health Department with regard to or in relation to the constitutional mandate?

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

As—because the DOH oversees the entire health system function of the entire country, it oversees the functions of each LGU, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. That is why it taps the LGUs to oversee the barangays as well as the smaller local government units so that it can give access and it can deliver our goods and services to the farthest areas of the regions, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Maganda po iyong nailagay natin sa ating talaan ngayon, subalit ang tanong po ng inyong lingkod ay, ide-devolve po ba natin ang functions ng Department of Health o mananatili tayong national agency controlling the funding? As of next year, they will be controlling something like P90 billion and depriving the local government units of their fiscal capacity to address the problem of health in their localities.

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the Department of Health still takes the lead and oversees the entire health system economy of the Philippines, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. We see the validity of having a national agency overseeing, but not actually rendering, because the actual rendering of health services would be best given by the local government units.

Alam po ninyo, wala naman po sigurong mas nakakaalam pa ng kalagayan ng anumang lungsod, munisipyo o barangay higit pa sa local government unit. At ito po ay mandato ng ating Saligang Batas under the principle of local autonomy. Malinaw po naman ang kautusan ng ating Saligang Batas of 1987, that the State will or shall ensure that all local government units will be given autonomy, and autonomy includes fiscal autonomy. Kaya madalas pong sabihin, ang may kasalanan ang local government unit when it comes to peace and order, health, and social welfare.

The truth of the matter is, the budget remains in the hands of the national government, and in this case, we are discussing the Department of

Health. Hindi po ba mas magandang sumunod tayo sa layunin ng ating Saligang Batas, at iyong salapi na hinihingi nila ay ipamahagi sa lahat ng probinsya at ang mga gobernador at mga mayor ang siyang magpatakbo ng programang pangkalusugan sa ating bansa?

Do they agree with that or do they not agree with the principle of decentralization?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the partnership of the local government health units with the DOH is such that the DOH provides for the expertise. The DOH also provides equipment and infrastructure but at the same time, its partnership with the LGU is such that the LGU will provide the personnel as well as the delivery of goods to the farthest areas of the municipality, of the locality, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. I can understand the honorable Sponsor. This is the thinking of the present leadership of the Department of Health and this is probably a reflection of the thinking of the President no less. But here in Congress, we would like to point out that we would like to give full meaning and substance to local autonomy since we are talking about federalization which is basically decentralization of the government.

Pag dumating po tayo sa federalization debates, this issue will crop up. Bakit hindi natin ibigay muna sa local ang trabaho bago tayo mag-usap ng pagbabago ng sistema? Because if we do not decentralize, then we are not respecting the mandate of the present Constitution. And if we are not honoring the mandate, then we should not even be talking about decentralization or change of systems or change of structure because that is what it will lead up to. Pupunta po tayo sa devolving functions of the national government to the regional and local government units.

So, we are putting it on record. We have asked the question and we have been answered. We will take it for now that this government, this administration does not accept the mandate given to all of us and that is now to exercise local autonomy which includes fiscal autonomy. Ibigay sa lokal ang trabaho at ibigay ang salapi upang lalong tumingkad ang serbisyo sa pangkalusugan. We will not have any further question on that as it has been on record that this administration is not committed to decentralization and local autonomy.

Now, we would like to ask specific questions on the budget. Nakita ko po sa budget na mayroon pong mga pondong inilalaan for certain hospitals. There are two items that we see: one which is almost a uniform P50 million per hospital and one which varies depending on the size of and services the hospitals provide. Iyon po ba ay kabuuan ng mahihintay ng mga ospital na manggagaling dito sa budget na ito?

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Your Honor.

Just to also note and put on record regarding your first concern, your earlier concern rather, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, because the health system is a complex system, it has to have a general driving force. It has to have the national DOH to oversee the functions and agenda that it should carry out for the entire year and as such, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, policies, as well as the budget will be coming from the DOH and the legwork and the personnel will be coming from the LGU. That is the structure that we are following right now, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

For your second question, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, yes, it is the plan of the Department to finish the proposed hospital facilities and equipment program in the different hospitals all over the country, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. With that statement, we will have to react further that although we agree that there has to be a national policy direction for health programs, we cannot agree that those in the national government are better managers of actual hospital services. San Lazaro Hospital would be best supervised by the local government. Hospitals in the Visayas, in Cebu would be best supervised by the Governor or Mayor of Cebu. I cannot and we will not agree with that notion that simply because there is a need for an overall health plan, then, therefore, the money meant for running the hospitals is also controlled by the national government. We will insist that the Constitution and its mandate be respected and we should decentralize all of these to the local government units as soon as possible. This Representation feels that we cannot go into federalization debates if we do not respect local autonomy and the decentralization of funds.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Though your statement is duly noted, we also need to have national standards for health development. We also need to have national programs that can cater to each individual region. Each region cannot function solely because there is a different system of government or a different way the mayor, the leader, and the governor is running it, Mr. Speaker. The DOH still believes that it has to have the mandate coming from up here before it can trickle down the effect to LGUs, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. We would like to stress, Mr. Speaker, that this is not a choice of the DOH leadership. It is a question of constitutionality and the mandate and the order of the Constitution. Ang sinasabi po ng ating Saligang Batas, this function should be best handled by the local government or the provincial government. What you are saying is that we cannot do so because the DOH leadership feels otherwise, at hindi po namin matatanggap

iyon. Mabuti pang sabihin na lang ninyo na wala pa tayong handang devolution or decentralization, then we will not be in a position to force the DOH to decentralize if they are not ready to do so. But if you insist that is a correct principle—can you imagine a public hospital in San Francisco being run by Washington? Can you imagine a hospital in Georgia being run by Washington? We cannot believe that that would be so. Hospitals would be best managed by the local government units and not the central government.

Anyway, if we will leave that portion of the debate open, we will agree because, as I said, we cannot insist on something which is not planned at this point. But we cannot agree that our respecting the constitutional mandate is misplaced. Tama po iyong Constitution eh. The State shall ensure, tinitiyak ng estado, dapat tiyakin ng estado ang pagbibigay ng kapangyarihang lokal. Kung kailan gagawin iyan, umasa tayo. Darating din ang isang Pangulo na rerespeto sa mandato ng ating Saligang Batas.

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, under the Local Government Code, it says that the devolution of basic health service will be given to LGUs. There are also national hospitals in the different regions as well as some local hospitals which are run by LGUs. The national hospitals are run by the DOH to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that the national programs are carried out properly, and that there are checks and balances within the disease system of the area, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Nakalagay po ba roon sa Local Government Code na ang mga sumusunod na ospital ay mapapailalim din sa kamay ng Department of Health? Could you read that passage, if there is. Wala po. We will leave it at that. Unless you insist that we continue the debate, we will engage you continually so that we will prove the point that devolution is already mandated. If they are not ready, they are not ready. But again, we long for that day when we will have a President who will say, “We will respect devolution and decentralization, and local autonomy will be given all local government units. Hospitals in Misamis will be managed by the provincial government of Misamis and hospitals in Manila will be managed by the Mayor of Manila.” Hindi po iyon ngayon. Mayroong mga ospital, local, mayroong ospital, national, so we will shift to that, Mr. Speaker.

Iyong mga national hospitals—nakita ko po dalawa ang item ng budget nila. Isa iyong para sa serbisyo at isa iyong para sa—ano po iyon, iyong parang uniform tig-50 million bawat isa.

REP. LANETE. I am sorry, Your Honor, I have to consolidate my—are we talking about the Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care?

As far as the 2017 GAB is concerned, there are—the budgets for different national hospitals are varied and not uniform, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. I will go into a specific hospital, Mr. Speaker, the Philippine Orthopedic Center. Magkano po ba ang inilalaan ninyo para sa operasyon at serbisyo ng Philippine Orthopedic Center? Ito po ang katangi-tanging ospital na umaasikaso sa problema ng bali, fracture and dislocation of bones and structure of any indigent patient. They specialize on putting in place the bone structure from whatever damage. Sila po ang maituturing nating takbuhan ng sinumang Pilipino na may problema sa anumang fracture ng kanyang katawan. Magkano po ba ang pondo natin ngayon diyan?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, I am sorry, I located already the—your initial question. I think these are the hospitals in the NCR which have at least around P50 million for the HFEP Program. More or less, Your Honor, the budget for each hospital will cover the equipment that each hospital will have and the lack will be covered by the income of each hospital, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Ano po iyong income sapagkat akala ko ay libre ang ating pagamutan? Do they expect to charge the indigent and the poor who are dependent on public hospitals? What income are you mentioning, honorable Sponsor?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, the income will be coming from the PhilHealth, also from the budget, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Well, you should not consider that as an income because ...

REP. LANETE. Sorry, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. ... that is government money going to the government in public services. Kasi kapag sinabi ninyong income, palagay ko magtatanong ang tao, “Aba, maniningil na sa public hospitals?” Wala po namang ganoong plano?

REP. LANETE. No, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. So we can assure our people that the free medical services shall continue

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Now, I am asking about the Philippine Orthopedic Center.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Alam ninyo, pinakamagaling na ospital iyan as far as bone fractures are concerned. I would highly recommend this hospital. I am a personal beneficiary of the efficient and expert services rendered in that hospital. I chose to be treated at the Philippine Orthopedic when I had a wrist fracture. Nabali po ang aking kamay, diyan po ako pumunta sapagkat naniniwala po ako sa galing ng ating mga doktor diyan. At totoo po naman, world class, sapagkat iyong magagaling na doktor, si Dr. Alagar, Dr. Dico, who serviced my fracture did a perfect job, and wala pong bayad. Nakakahiya nga po, kaya iyong lahat ng ginamit sa akin ay idinoneyt ko po roon sa hospital dahil walang bayad, and yet, you get an expert service.

Pero, ang kanilang problema roon, Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring forth this problem. Ang problema nila roon ay talagang wala silang equipment. Iyon pong kanilang pinaka-emergency room, parang Vietnam hospital, nakahandusay po iyong mga tao roon, bali iyong leeg, bali iyong paa, bali iyong baywang, nakalabas iyong buto. Wala po, wala po talagang equipment. Over the objections of my children, I insisted on being treated in that hospital from where I lined up, and was attended to very, very well by the expert doctors of that hospital. But it is begging, it is begging for more support and equipment. You mentioned a P50-million equipment outlay. There is something like P900 million for its operation. But you take a look at the premises of this hospital, magagaling ang doktor, subalit wala po talagang larawan ng kaayusan iyong kanilang ospital na pinagtatrabahuhan.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Your Honor.

Regarding the POC, it has P645-million budget this year, Your Honor. P42 million will be going to equipment that are necessary for it to be of good standards, Your Honor. So, for the coming year, the Department has allotted a big amount of the budget, so that many equipment will be bought brand new, and brought in, so that they could cater to more needs of the people, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po naman sa garantiyang iyon, sapagkat iyong nakita kong X-ray facilities noon, eh palagay ko ginamit pa po ni General MacArthur iyon noong nag-landing siya dito sa Pilipinas. I hope the DOH gives it more support considering that it is rendering free surgery for bone injuries among our poor indigent people.

Now, can I ask a relevant question connected to it? Itutuloy po ba iyang pinagtatalunan natin dito noong isang Kongreso, iyong privatization o pagbebenta ng lugar? Itutuloy po ba iyon o iyon ay forever archived and we can assure that the Philippine Orthopedic Center will remain as a bone and fracture hospital for the poor?

REP. LANETE. No, Your Honor, it will not go into the PPP program anymore and it will remain under the DOH, as well as the Fabella Hospital, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. So, do we have the assurance of the Department of Health, the present leadership, that they will not continue the so-called privatization, which actually is selling the property to the rich at the expense of the poor? Hindi na po itutuloy?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you for that assurance.

REP. LANETE. You have the guarantee of the DOH, that it will continue to aggressively enhance the equipment, upgrade the infrastructure and make better personnel services in the hospital, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. We thank the present leadership, therefore, for that assurance because we really feel guilty and we in Congress will feel doubly guilty if we do not question any privatization of any critically situated public hospital na tinatakbuhan po ng mga mahihirap.

Iyon po bang Veterans Memorial Hospital ay managed by the Department of Health o hindi po?

REP. LANETE. No, Your Honor, it is under the Department of National Defense.

REP. ATIENZA. National Defense. Iyong V. Luna, ganoon din po?

REP. LANETE. I am sorry, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. V. Luna.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor, it is under the DOH, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. So, the DOH has nothing to do with the announced privatization again of these public hospitals. Wala silang kinalaman doon.

REP. LANETE. No, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Maraming salamat po. We will go to the Department of National Defense for that issue.

Shifting now to a more—a very important and relevant question, ito pong pondo para sa Population Management, which is something like P4.2 billion, tama po ba iyong aking figure, P4.2 billion?

REP. ATIENZA. ... P4.2 billion?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, you are right, P4.26 billion, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. And almost all of the money is earmarked for Metro Manila or the National Capital Region.

REP. LANETE. This budget, Mr. Speaker, is for the entire country.

REP. ATIENZA. Opo.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. And almost all of this money is earmarked for the National Capital Region or is it going to be distributed nationwide?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, distributed nationwide. All over the country, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. And how much would go to the National Capital Region then?

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, the total budget for the NCR is P4.209 billion.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyon nga po. Iyon nga po ang aking sinasabi, almost the whole budget is earmarked for the National Capital Region. And all 99 percent of this budget is assigned to the central office. Tama po ba iyon?

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, the reason it is assigned to the central office is that more or less, P3.7 billion will be allocated for bidding and other commodities, and since the bidding and procurement will happen in the central office, Mr. Speaker, that is why there is a ...

REP. ATIENZA. When you say assigned to the central office, would that mean that the Secretary of Health has a discretionary or has full control of this fund which comprises practically the whole budget for a family, you call it family health and responsible parenthood which are very strange words for the purpose of the fund, health and responsible parenthood. Malayo po iyan doon sa paggamit ng perang iyan e.

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, of the P4.2 billion budget, almost P3.7 billion will go to commodities and bidding. I have here the list of the commodities which will be bid and procured by the Department, Mr. Speaker.

Since it will be procured by the central office, that is why there is a huge percentage of the amount here for the NCR, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Ang tanong ko po, Mr. Speaker, iyong P4.2 billion na naka-assign sa central office ay sino po ba ang magde-decide kung paano gagamitin ito? Iyon po ba ay desisyon ng Secretary of Health or desisyon ng Kongreso, or is it a lump-sum appropriation that the DOH is asking Congress today?

REP. LANETE. The remaining P600 million, Mr. Speaker, will be allocated to the programs specifically for responsible parenthood. And yes, under the directive of the Secretary, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. So, it is solely the Secretary of Health who will have full control of spending this huge amount of P4.205 billion. Are you accepting that, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, the Secretary is aided by the Population Commission Board which is headed by the different agencies of the government, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. We understand that, Mr. Speaker. What we are asking is, sino po ang gagastos noong pera? Wala po akong nakikita dito except P4,205,000,000 assigned to the central office. Ang sabi po nila, ang Secretary of Health ang siyang may hawak ng control. Itinatanong ko po, siya rin po ba ang magde-decide how this money will be spent eventually in the pursuance of whatever approved programs they may have?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, this is recommended to be spent, or rather it is spent by the program managers recommended, as well as the regional directors, Your Honor. So, this will already be devolved to the region.

REP. ATIENZA. Wala pong nakalagay ditong regional director and program managers. Ang sinasabi po rito, the central office will enjoy P4.2 billion. So, I just want to put it in record, iyon po bang pondong iyon under the control of the Secretary of Health, or ilagay nating regional directors or the program directors as mandated by law because we want transparency on how this fund will be utilized eventually.

We ask for a one-minute recess so that the Gentleman can meet with the Secretary and our staff.

REP. LANETE. Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Unless ready na po sila, unless ready sila to...

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, there is a work and financial plan that is prepared by the Board, approved by the Board, and then finally recommended by the

Secretary. So, there are already programs, there are already budgets for each kind of program in each region for this Family Health Program, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Alam po ninyo, hawak ko po itong budget, hawak din po ninyo, dapat sana pareho ang appreciation natin. Iyong mga probinsya, mayroong budget na P1 million, P2 million, and so on and so forth—iyon pong central office, P4.2 billion. Ang tinatanong ko at sagutin ninyo na lang nang malinaw, ito po ba ay under the control of the Secretary of Health? Then we will take it at such and we will have the right to question it as an oversight body later on, how are you spending that huge amount of money? Because right now, what we have in the budget is very clear, wala po namang sinasabi ritong program fund, director's discretion.

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, we will just get the breakdown. Your Honor, may I read from the notes given me regarding the budget allocation per region, regarding the Family Health budget. With your permission, Your Honor: for Region I, it is P122 million; Region II has P83.8 million; Region III has P351 million; Region IV-A, P515 million; Region IV-B, P93 million; Region V, P173 million; Region VI, P118.6 million; Region VII, P201.2 million, Your Honor; Region VIII, P123.6 million; Region IX, P122.8 million; Region X, P131.9 million; Region XI, P205.8 million; Region XII has P119.3 million; Region XIII has P94.6 million; the ARMM has P104.5 million; and Negros Island Region has P120.3 million, Your Honor, with a total of P4.26 billion, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyon po bang binasa ninyo ay nakasulat dito sa budget proposal ng Department of Health or it is a report that you are reading as supplied by the Department of Health officers today?

REP. LANETE. We will furnish you a copy of this report, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Opo, wala po dito sa libro iyon, kaya hindi po tayo magkaintindihan.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyan ay sinuplay sa inyo ngayon habang itinatanong ko iyong pondong iyon.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Anyway, ano po ba ang pakahulugan ng Department of Health? Well, I ask the Secretary because she is primarily in control of the program. How does she define Family Health and

Responsible Parenting? Ano po ba iyon? What do they really brief our people on, with that huge amount of money?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, this program, the Family Health and Responsible Parenting Program, aims to reduce the morbidity and mortality so that we can improve overall child health. It also reduces maternal deaths to support the attainment of health-related sustainable development goals.

REP. ATIENZA. So, it is supposed to be used to save lives?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Not to prevent the arrival of more lives?

REP. LANETE. It prevents the morbidity and mortality so that we improve the overall child health, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Anyway, let us call it as it is. It is a population control program that is funded with P4.2 billion, we will take it as such. Pero mayroon po tayong Supreme Court decision ngayon na hindi dapat gastusan nang ganyan kalaki kung susundin natin. The Supreme Court restraining order is a continuing one and indefinite as far as the Reproductive Health Law and its implementation is concerned. Meaning, baka ito po namang pondong ito ay napakalaki for a Reserve Fund sapagkat restrained po iyong programa, restrained iyong bisa ng batas, so therefore, walang paggugugulan. Ay ang dami pa namang may sakit ng TB, may sakit ng cancer, may sakit na mga mahihirap na kailangan ng gamot, ay mayroon po ditong pondo na mukhang hindi magagamit dahil sinuspinde ng Korte Suprema ang bisa noong Reproductive Health Law. Ano po ang reaction ng Secretary of Health doon sa aking katanungan?

REP. LANETE. We respect the decision of the Supreme Court, Your Honor, and we await the decision whatever it may be.

REP. ATIENZA. Kung sakaling lumipas ang buong taon ng 2017 na hindi binabago ng Korte Suprema ang kanilang kautusan, itong pondong ito ay dapat hindi gamitin ninuman at dapat ito bumalik sa General Fund, hindi po ba?

REP. LANETE. You are right, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Samantala, dahil itong programang ito na alam naman natin ano ang paggamit, mayroon pong bahagi diyang for natural family planning, tama po

ba iyon o mali? Mayroon pong pondo for natural family planning, mayroon pong pondo for condoms, mayroon pong birth control pills. Ang amin nga pong kinontra iyong Implanon sapagkat iyon ay hindi pa aprubado ng FDA kaya hindi puwedeng gamitin, kaya iyon po ang puno't dulo ng restraining order. You cannot continue endangering the lives of our women with your birth control materials and we thank the Supreme Court for this. But I am asking, mayroon po bang component diyang ang natural family planning?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor. It has an allocation of P3 million for around 50,000 population, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Magkano po ho ulit, hindi ko po nakuha iyong exact figure, did I hear P3 million?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor, P3 million.

REP. ATIENZA. P3 million out of P4.2 billion, iyon po ba? Tiyak po ninyo Ginoong Sponsor because napakahalaga po ng isyung iyan sa buong bansa. Puwede pong pag-usap-usapan ninyong lahat ngayon, because, the law provided, Mr. Speaker, that the natural way of controlling or spacing children or childbirth is provided equally with the other methods. Now, the Gentleman is now saying, he sees a P3 million allocation, which is again a violation of the intention of the Reproductive Health Law. Eh, isa po iyan sa aming kukuwestiyunin. Bakit P3 million ang natural at P4.2102 iyong artificial? Eh, talagang gusto ninyong patayin lahat ng kababaihan natin.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor, I am sorry for the ...

REP. ATIENZA. Magkano po?

REP. LANETE. I would like to rectify the previous statement I made.

For the family planning commodities, it is a total of P165.4 million, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. It would still be a violation of the mandate and the order of the Reproductive Health Law. But, we will take it as such.

Could we read again the figure, honorable Sponsor.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Your Honor.

For the family planning commodities, it has a budget of P165,402,410, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. P165.402 million, again, although it is a violation of the intention of the Reproductive Health Law, we will take it as such.

Let me remind the Sponsor and the Secretary of Health, the natural method is not a mandated or ordered restraint. It is something that the government should continue because it does not involve any artificial chemicals into the bodies of our mothers and women. So ang tanong ko po ay bakit hindi ninyo ituloy iyong natural method seminars? Turuan po ninyo ang mga dapat turuan ng inyong mga family planning o family control nang hindi kayo lalabag sa layunin ng temporary restraining order.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor. At the moment, the Department is also continuing the program of the natural family planning method, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. So, while the effects of the RH Law are suspended, the natural family planning method will continue to be promoted. Tama po ba iyon?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor. It will continue programs like education and basic tips to mothers-to-be, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. We welcome that decision because, again, it shows that our concern and that of the DOH is to help plan families and not just to deprive mothers of more babies.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. We welcome that decision and we hope you help those engaged in the natural family planning programs so that your program, not ours—because kung ang masusunod po talaga ay iyong aming pilosopiya, a culture of life, eh hindi po natin tuturuan ng mali ang mga ina. Hindi natin bibigyan ng lason ang mga ina. Hindi natin bibigyan ng nakalalason at nakapagpapa-baog na mga Implanon and plasters on the bodies of our women because we cherish and we value their health genuinely.

Naniniwala rin po kami na mas maraming Pilipino, mas madaling uunlad ang ating bansa. Ang bumubuhay po sa ating ekonomiya ngayon, na kung wala ay wala na po siguro tayong ekonomiya, ay ang mga Pilipinong nagtatrabaho sa abroad, 10 million of them at iyong mga nasa BPO. Iyan po ang dalawang industriya na bumubuhay sa ating lahat, na kung hindi ipinanganak at tayo ay kakaunti, palagay ko ang laki na ng problema ng Pilipinas.

Thanks to our growing population. Thanks to the Divine Providence of blessing our nation not only with rich natural resources but with a lot of Filipinos being born. We hope that one day, we will have a President who will again teach us the positive values of life and not to depend on an alibi of failure. Kapag dumadami ang tao, naghihirap ang bansa. Mali. Kapag maraming

tao, maunlad ang bansa. Nandiyan po ang Tsina, huwag na tayo lumihis. Nandiyan ang India, nandiyan ang lahat ng bansa na umunlad habang ang kanilang bilang ay lumalago.

The population control programs of this government, and for that matter the past governments, are all distorted and disjointed. Mali po ang arithmetic nila na kapag maraming tao, mahirap paunlarin. Hindi umuunlad ang ating bansa dahil sa pagnanakaw sa pamahalaan. Corruption is the number-one problem of our nation.

Gawin na lang nating 10 ang Pilipinong maiiwan after your aggressive population control program is implemented. Kung siyam ay nagnanakaw pa rin, mahirap pa rin ang isang maiiwan. Labanan po natin ang katiwalian. Ipagtanggol natin ang buhay. Kung ang ating Secretary of Health ay ganito ang gagawin, naniniwala akong hindi lang siya magtatagumpay, kung hindi tatanghalin siyang tagapagtanggol ng buhay ng bawat nilalang na nagmumula sa palad ng Panginoong Diyos.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to clarify very important matters in the budget of the DOH. This Representation is satisfied with the guarantees given.

May ipinaalala sa akin, Mr. Speaker, isa pang ospital, ibinenta na daw po ang Fabella?

REP. LANETE. No, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Just like the Philippine Orthopedic Center, the Department even plans to upgrade the facilities, equipment and better the influx of personnel in Fabella Hospital.

REP. ATIENZA. Samakatuwid, hindi po aalisin ang Fabella sa lugar nito?

REP. LANETE. No, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mananatili po sa downtown Manila ang kinaroroonan ng ospital.

REP. LANETE. Sorry, Mr. Speaker, while it will not be sold to a PPP program, it will be transferred to a different facility because the structural component of the Fabella Hospital is not already acceptable.

REP. ATIENZA. Mahirap tanggapin ang reasoning na the strength and the structure is no longer safe. Iyan po ang dahilan ng mga gobyerno na nagbebenta ng lupa at iba pang mga pag-aari nito, hindi po dahil sa gusto nilang ayusin, kundi dahil gusto nilang kumita.

We maintain that any privatization of any hospital must be suspended if this government really means well in their efforts to give our people a better health service. Otherwise, they are merely succumbing, sumusuko po sila sa pressures ng developers na walang ginawa kung hindi tingnan ang properties ng gobyerno, national or

local, para tayuan nila ng condominium at ng kung ano pa. Meanwhile, ang mga mahihirap ay mananatiling may problema sa kanilang kalusugan.

Fabella is the number one hospital rendering free maternity services to our poor people. Iyan po ay isang ospital na matagal na ang kasaysayan sa paglilingkod at pagtulong. Kapag inalis ito sa kinatatayuan, sumuko tayo sa pressures ng mga mayayaman. At iyan ay sagutin natin sa darating na panahon.

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, just to assure the Gentleman, that is not the plan of the DOH. The Department disagrees to disruption, as well as inefficiency in the government. That is why the DOH has planned to transfer Fabella simply because, first and foremost, the structure is not qualified and not safe anymore. It is crumbling and is slowly degrading. Plus, the transfer site will just be four blocks away, and it is much bigger. It is new and it can accommodate 400 more patients compared to the previous hospital, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Although we are not accepting such reasoning, Mr. Speaker, we will take the word of the distinguished Sponsor, but we will continue to monitor the developments at Fabella because it is one hospital that is very near to our hearts.

Marami nang natulungan ang ospital at marami nang isinilang diyan. May mga bayani nang itinanghal sa mga isinilang diyan kaya hindi po kami titigil hanggang hindi namin nakikita ang tunay na kadahilanan. Ang mga sinasabi ninyo ngayon, naka-record po naman sa ating Kongreso.

We will continue to monitor the Fabella story as we are concerned with the genuine intentions of this project, again on privatization, which we hope does not happen anymore to any hospital site. Ang mga ospital natin ay strategically located, talagang naglalaway diyan ang mga developers. They want to take hold of these properties for their benefit and their investments, and not for the welfare of our people.

Again, I am going back to my original question, the Department of Health and the Social Welfare and Development Department must respect the mandate of the Constitution. Devolution is mandated, decentralization is required. Empowering the local government units is the need of the time. We may not even have to go into federalization if we implement the local autonomy mandate of the present Constitution.

Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Floor Leader. Thank you for the kind indulgence of the honorable Sponsor for being patient with our impatience dahil talaga po namang sobra-sobra na ang kahirapan ay pinahihirap pa ng maling prinsipyo ng pamamahala.

Salamat po.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Arlene D. Brosas from the GABRIELA Party-List for her interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The distinguished Representative Brosas is recognized.

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the distinguished Sponsor clarify some matters regarding the budget and the policies of the DOH?

REP. LANETE. Of course, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. My first question, Mr. Speaker, is on the Fabella modernization. Per Fabella modernization case dated April 3, 2014, the medical component cost is at least P383 million. This was put forward in the hospital's budget proposal but was not included in the DOH NEP for 2017 in the hope of sourcing it from PAGCOR. Bakit kailangang kunin pa natin sa PAGCOR ang pondo para dito, sa halip na isama na lang sa 2017 proposed budget para tiyak na makapagbibigay ng serbisyo ang ating ospital para sa mga bata at kababaihan?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, thank you for that question.

The Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital has a budget of P664.6 million for 2017, and the Department has seen to it that it will enhance its facilities, as well as its equipment to the tune of P53.3 million, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. That is why we can assure the Congresswoman that the Department is really monitoring, as well as pushing for the instrumentation, as well as the upgrade of the Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital.

REP. BROSAS. Again, Mr. Speaker, the P664.6 million that the distinguished Sponsor said, where is it in the NEP 2017 Budget? Where is it exactly?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, based on the General Appropriations Bill, it is on page 1093.

Just to continue further, the Capital Outlay for infrastructure, as well as for equipment under the Health Facilities Enhancement Program for the said hospital, has increased by more than 100 percent, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. Previously, it was allocated with P60 million: P50 million for infrastructure and P10 million for equipment. For 2017, we are targeting P140 million for equipment only.

REP. BROSAS. Yes. Mr. Speaker, there is no reflection in the General Appropriations Bill, wala

po sa mga provisions na magtitiyak sa paglalaan sa Fabella. Na-check po natin iyan sa page 1071 ng General Appropriations Bill, Volume 1-A. Supposedly, nasa Special Provisions po dapat naka-indicate kung ano exactly ang sa PAGCOR na badyet na kukunin at magkano ito.

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, we are looking at page 226 of the NEP and page 1093 of the GAB, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Yes, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. It is very general because ang nakalagay lang po doon ay ang Capital Outlay and everything, pero walang specifics.

REP. LANETE. We have the MOOE and Personnel Services, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, and I have with me the HFEP or the Health Facilities Enhancement Program document which states that the allocated budget for the Fabella Memorial Hospital is P140 million for equipment alone. May I furnish the Congresswoman a copy of the HFEP details, as well as the breakdown for Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Yes, please, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. May we have a copy, and please specify how much will the PAGCOR give and kung anu-ano ang mga paglalagyan nito.

REP. LANETE. Duly noted, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, and the Department will furnish the Congresswoman immediately as soon as we get the allocation coming from the PAGCOR.

REP. BROSAS. Okay. Mr. Speaker, ilang taong walang badyet for Capital Outlay ang Fabella, hindi po nakapagtataka na mag-deteriorate talaga eventually ang building at medical facilities. Kaya po sa narinig ko kanina, dapat bigyan talaga ng tamang pondo para ng sa ganoon ay maayos ang mga ito. Bukod po dito, mayroon pa akong ilan pang mga questions.

May mga opisina at pasilidad ng Fabella, Medical Center Chief and its attached units, the School of Midwifery and the COA ang ililipat pansamantala sa Lung Center compound effective November, until their final transfer to the DOH compound in 2017. Magkano ang gagastusin ng Fabella para sa plano ng paglipat at saan kukunin ang pondo para dito?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, as we are going over the notes, may we be allowed, may the Department be allowed to furnish the Congresswoman a copy of the data which she is requesting. But for the moment the Department is still going over its notes regarding the budget.

REP. BROSAS. Yes, distinguished Sponsor. Ipinapaalala ko lang po, dalawa na ang kailangang ipasa sa amin na documents.

REP. LANETE. That is duly noted, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. All breakdowns of the budget for Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital will be provided.

REP. BROSAS. Okay. Next po, the DOH Health Facilities Development Bureau advised the Fabella to limit its services while transferring the facilities. Sinuhayan pa ito ng proposal to downsize the bed capacity from 700 to 200. Sa progreso ng paglipat ng offices at medical facilities, ilang inpatients at outpatients ang maaapektuhan nito?

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the initial plan to transfer Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital to the Lung Center did not push through. That is why the downgrading was not implemented. No patient was eventually displaced, and no service was denied of our patients, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. So wala pa po tayong inililipat, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. The Lady is right, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BROSAS. Ano po ang balak natin later? Balak pa rin po ba nating ilipat? Paano po natin mae-ensure o matitiyak na affordable at accessible pa rin ito sa mga mahihirap nating kababayan?

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, it will be transferred four blocks away, still in Tayuman. It will carry a bigger capacity to 850 lying-in patients as compared to the more than 400 which it is carrying now. It has better infrastructure, it has better equipment and more personnel will be employed under this program, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, nais ko pong itanong dito kung ililipat at mas malaki nga ang capacity, pero paano ang mga pasyente sa process ng paglilipat? Paano po natin sila mabibigyan ng dagliang tugon, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. The Department undergoes strict policies and guidelines regarding emergency situations, Mr. Speaker. Some patients have already been evacuated before. If, for example, there is an impending doom—earthquakes, storms or typhoons—the transfer if ever among in-patients, Mr. Speaker, will not be a problem. They just have to follow protocol. However, in this case, the Department will see to it that it will not transfer any

patient. It will discharge all patients before using the new facility.

REP. BROSAS. Yes. Do we have statistics o kung ilang patients po ang maaapektuhan? Ilan ang outpatients o inpatients na maaapektuhan, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. Again, Mr. Speaker, the Department's plan is to transfer the personnel, but not the patients. Assuming that the new facility will be ready, the admitted patients, the lying-in patients of the old hospital will be discharged and the new hospital will admit new patients only, Mr. Speaker. No patient will be transferred to the new facility.

REP. BROSAS. Okay po iyon na ina-assure ninyo kami na hindi sila maaapektuhan. Iyon po kasi ang inaalala ng mga nanay na nagpapatingin sa Fabella dahil kadalasan, alam naman po ninyo, ang socioeconomic na kalagayan ng mga pumpunta sa Fabella Hospital. Iyan po ay isa sa mga public hospitals natin. Diyan talaga unang-una pumupunta ang mga buntis na mahihirap sa ating bansa.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department also takes and monitors these patients, Mr. Speaker. The Department assures the Lady that it will take care of the patients to be admitted and who have regular check-ups at the Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, my next line of questioning is on the PhilHealth coverage.

PhilHealth moved from free-for-service or FFS, to case-based payment, CBP or case rate system. Under the FFS, providers were paid up to a certain limit for every patient's hospitalization. Any amount exceeding PhilHealth rates will be shouldered by the patients.

Under this scheme, coverage and not care is the primary objective, thus, limiting the health care services provided to Filipinos. The so-called "low-risk illnesses" such as low-risk pneumonia, community-acquired pneumonia, and other respiratory diseases are not covered by insurance, despite being one of the causes of increasing mortality rates in the Philippines. How do you plan to address these concerns?

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department through PhilHealth plans to implement the no-balance billing. Under the program of PhilHealth, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the DSWD will be the Department to categorize patients who are indigents. We assure the honorable Congresswoman that all indigents will have a no-balance billing, which means, that they will impose out-of-pocket charges, while accepting treatment inside the hospitals, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BROSAS. Next question po. Universal health care (UHC) should focus on preventive health care. Outpatient diagnostic tests are not covered by health insurance, thus, increasing out-of-pocket payments of the patients. Are we not missing the purpose of UHC, kung sa umpisa pa lang ng pagpapakunsulta at mga laboratory exams ay butas na ang bulsa ng ating mga pasyente?

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just like in our previous statement, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, indigent patients will still have benefits from PhilHealth, most especially under the PCB Program, the primary care billing program, which includes maternal health, TB-DOTS Program, as well as the primary healthcare needs of our patients, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BROSAS. Thank you. Sa last na lang po na question. Sa mga nakaraang mga budget hearings at dialogues with the DOH, isa sa mga binabanggit na challenges sa paghahatid ng serbisyong pangkalusugan ay ang pagiging devoted ng health services. Ano po ba ang tugon natin dito? Napapanahon na ba para muling i-nationalize ang health services upang matiyak na lahat na bahagi ng bansa ay maabot ng tulong medikal?

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, the Department takes care of the national objectives for health. While we may say it is devolved in a way that the Department issues an order or allows LGUs to cover some diseases and some morbidities, the Department is still central and national in nature. Such that, the policies, programs, as well as the disease interventions, preventions, and control are still within the power of the central office, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BROSAS. Okay. So nag-a-agree po kayo na dapat may mga nationalization programs talaga tayo para sa health?

REP. LANETE. Most definitely, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BROSAS. May ilang issue pa po ako. Kung maaalala po natin, ilang buwan bago ang electoral campaign period, panay ang labas ng PhilHealth advertisement sa telebisyon ng noon ay PhilHealth Board of Director na ngayon ay Senador na si Risa Hontiveros. Sa pagkakaalam po namin, sa bawat 30-second advertisement, ito ay nagkakahalaga ng mahigit P400,000 or halos kalahating milyong piso. Maaari po bang malaman kung magkano ang nagastos ng PhilHealth para sa kabuuang airing ng advertisement na iyon?

REP. LANETE. None, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. The PhilHealth did not spend a single centavo for that, for those advertisements, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BROSAS. Hindi po nag-spend?

REP. LANETE. No, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. That was from personal donations that were not included in the budget of PhilHealth. The PhilHealth did not spend for anything regarding your query, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. So, iyong mga ads sa bus, print, at iba pang naglalaman ng mukha ng mga kandidato, iyon po ay walang binadyet and PhilHealth?

REP. LANETE. That is right, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BROSAS. Okay. I want it to be on record para po alam natin kung saan nilalagay o ginagastos, o sino ang nakikinabang para sa badyet ng mamamayan, lalung-lalo na ng mga mahihirap. Hindi po dapat na ang mga taong may ambisyon sa pulitika ang makinabang para sa badyet, para sa pera ng mamamayan.

With this dismal health budget, kasi sa tingin namin ay maliit talaga ang badyet na ito para sa direct services para sa ating mamamayan, the public hospitals will be forced to generate income for their operations by collecting higher fees from the patients. This will lead to corporatization and privatization of public hospitals and eventually the entire healthcare system. Kaya po gusto namin na talagang ang mga public hospitals natin ay ating maalagaan, mapangalagaan. We should do more to the people's right to health.

With this, I end my interpellation, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ALONTE-NAGUIAT. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the First District of Albay, Rep. Edcel C. Lagman.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Representative from the First District of Albay, Representative Lagman, is hereby recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to a series of questions?

REP. LANETE. Certainly, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Let me start by quoting the

President in his State of the Nation Address. He said and I quote:

The implementation of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law must be put into full force and effect so that couples, especially the poor, will have freedom of informed choice on the number and spacing of children they can adequately care and provide for, eventually making them more productive members of the labor force.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, do you recall that statement of the President in his State of the Nation Address?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. The President made this statement because he was fully aware that the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law was declared by the Constitution in the main to be not constitutional or to be constitutional. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes. And in that decision, effectively, the Supreme Court rejected the proposition that contraceptives are poison. Is that correct, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, we go to the recent Supreme Court decision with respect to the law.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the decision of the Supreme Court like its prior TRO did not stop the implementation of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. The decision was limited to the certifications pending or to be certified with respect to family planning supplies which should undergo what the Supreme Court said, due process. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. That is correct, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, not all contraceptives have been prohibited or banned. There are many more which have already been certified and which are not covered by the TRO in the decision of the Supreme Court. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. I would submit, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, that before Members of this august Chamber would interpellate, they should first consult the law so that in their interpellation, they will not propagate their biases and their interpellations would border on erroneous statements which could mislead the Filipino public, the audience, as well as the Members of the House. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. If you consult the law, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, there is no provision which requires the government to appropriate equal sums, equal budgets for modern family planning methods and the so-called “natural family planning method.” Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Let me go to the pertinent provision of the law, and this is Section 3, paragraph (e), and I quote:

The State shall promote and provide information and access, without bias, to all methods of family planning, including effective natural and modern methods which have been proven medically safe, legal, non-abortionifacient, and effective in accordance with scientific and evidence-based medical research standards x x x

Is that a correct reading of the law, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, not every natural family planning method, not the traditional method is being given promotion. What is going to be promoted are what we call “effective natural methods.” If the method, which is natural, is not effective, under the law, it need not be promoted. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker. As long as the method is effective, then, we shall promote that method, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. The law even says that modern natural methods of family planning should be funded because these are effective. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. We go to another pertinent section, Section 10, Procurement and Distribution of Family Planning Supplies, which states and I quote:

The DOH shall procure, distribute to LGUs and monitor the usage of family planning supplies for the whole country. The DOH shall coordinate with all appropriate local government bodies to plan and implement this procurement and distribution program. The supply and budget allotments shall be based on, among others, the current levels and projections of the following:

- a) Number of women of reproductive age and couples who want to space or limit their children;
- b) Contraceptive prevalence rate, by type of method used; and
- c) Cost of family planning supplies.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, there is empirical basis for the appropriation of funds for family planning supplies. This would be based on the demand and preference of users and acceptors. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Presently, the demand or preference is for modern family planning methods. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. And the preference for natural family planning methods is far behind the demand for...

REP. LANETE. You are correct, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. ... the modern methods. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Consequently, the appropriation for family planning supplies of the nature of modern family planning methods would be much bigger, greater than any appropriation for effective natural methods because the preference for the latter is low. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. That is correct, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. So that I am making this interpellation to disabuse the mind of the public, including

our colleagues on the import of the Reproductive Health Law and the specific provisions in the law. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, we go to the appropriation. The appropriation for family planning supplies is under the budget line item on Family Health and Responsible Parenting. Is that correct, Your Honor?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. The items under this Family Health and Responsible Parenting do not all pertain to reproductive health and family planning. Is that correct, Your Honor?

REP. LANETE. That is correct, Your Honor, not directly, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. For example, there is the procurement of drugs and medicines (iron, vitamin A, calcium lactate, iodine, antibiotics) in the amount of P1,783,774,909. This is not related specifically to family planning. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. That is correct, Your Honor, it is not directly related to the family planning.

REP. LAGMAN. There is also the item on Nutrition, Therapeutic Food for "severe acute malnutrition" SAM in the amount of P269,216,850. This is not also related to family planning. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. You are correct, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. And then there is the dental supplies of P707,33,436. Again, this is not related to responsible parenting.

REP. LANETE. You are correct, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. It could be related to family health but definitely not to family planning and reproductive health.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Then, there is also this item on vaccine HPV in the amount of P650 million. Again, this is not related to family planning or reproductive health. Is that correct, Your Honor?

REP. LANETE. You are correct, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, this Family Health and Responsible Parenting appropriation of P4.2 billion

does not refer in its entirety to family planning and responsible parenthood. Is that correct, Your Honor?

REP. LANETE. That is correct, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. As a matter of fact, the overwhelming amount does not refer to family planning and responsible parenthood. Is that correct, Your Honor?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. What is germane here would be the amount of P165,402,410, for family planning supplies. Is that correct, Your Honor?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor, that is the direct budget for family planning supplies.

REP. LAGMAN. And this measly amount is even lower than the appropriation for the current year. Is that correct, Your Honor?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. So, it is completely inaccurate and misleading to say that the entire P4.2 billion is for family planning and reproductive health. Is that correct, Your Honor?

REP. LANETE. That is correct, Your Honor. As a matter of fact, for this year, Your Honor, the total budget allocation for family planning supplies is P596.8 million, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Can I get that again, Your Honor, because from my record, as proposed in the General Appropriations Bill, the family planning supplies is only P165,402,410.00.

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, the budget for 2016, for this year, Your Honor, for the family planning supplies is P596.8 million. However, for next year, which you are correct, you have correctly pointed out, Your Honor, it is way lower at P165.4 million.

REP. LAGMAN. It is way much lower.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. ...despite the fact that a portion of that budget for the current year has been hijacked during the Bicameral Conference Committee. Is that correct, Your Honor?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. The Department of Health has undertaken a study known as the Costed Implementation Plan or CIP. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. And under the CIP, how much savings would be realized for every peso earmarked for family planning and reproductive health?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, the savings in the CIP program would be P40 for every P1 spent under the program, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Could you cite any other budgetary outlay which would generate savings of P0.40 per peso appropriated?

REP. LANETE. No, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. No. It is only with respect to reproductive health and family planning. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. And according to the CIP, if we are able to adequately appropriate for family planning and reproductive health, per woman-per year, how much is obtained?

REP. LANETE. Four hundred eighty, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Four hundred eighty, so there is good reason to make the necessary and adequate appropriation for family planning and reproductive health. Is that correct, Your Honor?

REP. LANETE. That is correct, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. The CIP constitutes three dimensions: one, supportive environment, which concerns contraceptive security, family planning grants, and allied expenditures; two, leadership and management, which this would be with respect to family planning division and other administrative services; and, three, social marketing or reversing the fear of side effect, and the media campaign, which is authorized under the law.

Is that correct, Your Honor?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. And can you provide this august Chamber, between the proposed 2016 appropriations

for family health and responsible parenting including family planning and reproductive health, what is the budget gap?

REP. LANETE. For this year, Mr. Speaker, for 2017, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, because there is a need to augment the budget as proposed, because there are budget gaps. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, on the overall, the budget gap is one billion, no, one ...

REP. LANETE. P1.8 billion, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. P1.8 billion. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is correct.

REP. LAGMAN. So, that is what this sector would need from the budget, Mr. Speaker. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, that would end my interpellation with respect to family planning and reproductive health. But let me go to the Dengue Vaccination Program.

I have received a letter from the Department of Health, entitled: Report on the Dengue Vaccine Program. It is premised by the background, which I will quote:

The Asia-Pacific Region accounts for 70 percent of the global disease burden of dengue.

Among countries, the Philippines ranks number one in the number of dengue cases in the Western-Pacific Region from 2013 to 2015. A total of 200,415 suspected dengue cases were reported nationwide in 2015 and 101,401 cases from January to August 2016. Dengue remains to be the leading mosquito-borne viral disease in the country. Regions III, IV-A and NCR have the most number of cases nationwide for the past three years.

In order to combat this problem, the Department of Health has undertaken a dengue school-based immunization. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. And the first doses had already been given to Regions III, IV-A and NCR. May we know whether the Department of Health is going to continue with this immunization program.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, within the pilot areas, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, starting October, this month, the second dose will be given to the pupils or students given the first dose earlier this year.

Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. That is correct, Mr. Speaker. October to November of this year will be the target months for the ...

REP. LAGMAN. And we do not have to appropriate funds for this initial phase because the Department of Health has already purchased the necessary vaccines.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is correct.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, after this initial stage, is the Department of Health going to continue the same with respect to other regions?

REP. LANETE. Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, this dengue vaccine is relatively new the market. So, it has just passed Phase 3 clinical trials, and since it was undergone pilot implementation in Regions III, IV-A and NCR, it is now undergoing Phase 4 clinical trial. The Department also has already issued a resolution dated October 3 that since the zero prevalence in Region VII is more than 70 percent or way above the recommendation, it will expand the program to Region VII as well, Your Honor. However, since it is still in clinical trial, it would be prudent for the Department, Your Honor, to study the program after five years. So, in answer to your query, Your Honor, it will expand and continue the program to the pilot areas which the Department has identified. However, it holds itself after five years before implementing the program nationwide, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. In other words, that is a tentative stoppage of the program. But, there is a possibility that it will be continued depending on the expert studies being undertaken.

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, initially, the program was set really for Regions III, VI-A and NCR for the pilot areas. Once this will be okay, once the clinical trials are completed and are deemed safe, then the Department will continue with the program nationwide, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you with that answer.

But, let me just ask whether this resolution which has no number yet, series of 2016, has been signed by the majority of the members of the panel, because my copy has only four signatures.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor, it has been signed by all members, as well as approved by the honorable Secretary, Your Honor.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, for accommodating my questions.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ALONTE-NAGUIAT. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from KABAYAN Party-List, Rep. Harry Roque.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The distinguished Gentleman from KABAYAN Party-List is hereby recognized, Rep. Harry Roque.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Floor Leader.

Let me first pursue, Mr. Speaker, the last point of the Honorable Lagman. And, I would like to know from the good Sponsor, whether or not this Dengue Program will, once and for all, continue because I understand, Mr. Speaker, that this was, in fact, cancelled after about half a million of our children were given the first dose of this vaccine.

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, the program was not cancelled, and the Department is continuing with the pilot implementation of the program which covers Regions III, VI-A and NCR. And, by the time the second dose of the first pilot areas is given, it will still expand to Region VII, around October or November of this year, Your Honor, for the first dose of Region VII, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Thank you for that answer, Mr. Speaker. But my apprehension is this undated resolution came at the time when there was apparently a previous action on the part of the Secretary of the Department of Health to discontinue this program. My concern, Mr. Speaker, really, is the apparent flip-flop of the Secretary of Health as far as the Dengue Program is concerned. Now, will the kind Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, in fact, admit that this program was suspended, and I believe that the suspension was on July 20, 2016?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, the Department, as well as the Secretary, assures the honorable Gentleman, that it will continue the program, most especially in the pilot areas and it will review within the five-year clinical trial phase for the continuation of the program within the entire nation, Your Honor.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Mr. Speaker, apparently, that precisely is my concern because I do not know what will happen to the Dengue Program. It was implemented; it was suspended, and now it is being implemented. Meanwhile, I have received reports that when this program was cancelled, P500-million worth of these dengue vaccines were recalled from the health centers, DOH health centers, and were brought to warehouses of the Department of Health. My question is, since we are talking about P500-million worth of these vaccines, are these DOH warehouses where they were brought, properly equipped to deal with these vaccines? Are they, for instance, refrigerated? Because I would not like to see P500-million worth of vaccines go to waste, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, the number of vaccines initially targeted for the population was around 750,000. However, only around 489,000 children were vaccinated, and I think that is the data which you are referring to. The remaining vaccines, Your Honor, are left within the health centers and were not brought to a central facility within the DOH, but the Department assures the honorable Gentleman that these are stored in appropriate containers and warehouses where they will last as long as their expiry, Your Honor.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Again, Mr. Speaker, I hate to belabor the point but when this dengue vaccine was initially cancelled, it was also apparently by virtue of an advisory group report which, unlike the second one, which bore only the signatures of three individuals including the Secretary of Health. So, I do not understand why, in the first place, it was initially cancelled even if majority of the members of the advisory group did not recommend the suspension of the Dengue Vaccination Program.

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, the second phase, the second dose, rather, of the Dengue Vaccine Program is due this October and November. The Department will be continuing with the second dose, and hopefully the third dose by next year, Your Honor. At this time, the Department is expanding pilot areas to Region VII, as well, Your Honor. Region VII will have its first dose this coming October or November, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Well, so that the record of Congress will be very clear, it is my information that it was one Dr. Julius A. Lecciones, Chief of Hospital of the Philippine Children's Medical Center, who reported that he received a verbal order relayed to him from the DOH to hold the delivery of the dengue vaccine for the second dose. And this is correct. May I know if this is correct, from the good Sponsor.

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, I think this is in relation to the flooding risk in Region III that it was withheld for a short period. However, this program was never cancelled, Your Honor, and it is a continuing program. As a matter of fact, the Department is eager and excited to deliver second doses to the different pupils administered during the previous first dose session, Your Honor.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the denial that the program was suspended. This august Chamber has the power to summon Doctor Lecciones, and the reason I asked why there was a cancellation is, perhaps, there must be a good reason. Just this afternoon, there was a lobbyist in my office who tried to explain that the vaccines had to be suspended apparently because they were being piloted prior to the approval of clinical trials. So I am not, Mr. Speaker, making any valid judgment on the suspension, but we need to know, as a matter of fact, if a P3-billion project was suspended after its initial implementation because, Mr. Speaker, why would there be a need for this resolution now which recommends, and I quote, "to expand the dengue school-based immunization, to conduct catch-up immunization for missed pupils in Regions III, IV-A, and NCR," if the program was not cancelled?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, during the first-dose administration of the program, it was initially targeted for 750,000 pupils. However, only 489,000 were able to be administered doses for many reasons, Your Honor.

One reason is that they could be absent. Another is they could be sick, they have fever, they have flu. Another reason, Your Honor, is that they may be pregnant, among others, Your Honor. These are part of the reasons that there is a gap between the targeted population and the number of doses given apart from the fact that it was also administered during the summer break wherein a lot of the pupils were—many were having their graduation or were absent, or some parents did not sign the parental consent form for these individuals. Therefore, Your Honor, this is the gap that we are talking about, Mr. Speaker. That is why there is a 500,000 balance as of today, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Mr. Speaker, I understand the predicament of the Sponsor. It was not he after all who caused the suspension of this program. But, Mr. Speaker, for the record, we have had committee deliberations on the budget of the DOH. It was no less than our Deputy Speaker from Cebu who brought the issue of dengue vaccination. It was very clear, as the transcripts will in fact show, that it was the position of the Secretary of Health that that dengue vaccination was suspended. I

am bewildered now as to why the same Secretary of Health is now saying it was never suspended.

Now, I quoted from the resolution which is dated October 3, signed by six individuals and noted by the Secretary of Health, precisely, second paragraph of the resolution, “to conduct catch-up immunization for missed pupils in Regions III, IV-A and NCR” to prove that although the second vaccine was supposed to be given to our children, subsequent to the first one, there was in fact a decision to suspend it. I would like, Mr. Speaker, to warn, precisely, the highest officialdom in our government, Cabinet officials, that to say a falsity in Congress is a crime, not just contempt. It is especially punished by the Revised Penal Code. But the good Sponsor, I acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, cannot answer for the Secretary of Health.

I will go to another instance, on the Secretary of Health’s flip-flop. In the first committee hearing on the budget of the DOH, I asked the good Secretary of Health on the real status of the Zika infection in the Philippines. I did so because I saw her in the news saying, “There are no cases of Zika virus in the Philippines.” Only to be rebuked and contradicted by two of her Undersecretaries in the same news program indicating that there are already Zika cases in the Philippines.

In that committee deliberation, the Secretary said, “Well, my press conference was a Thursday, we have since uncovered the cases of Zika.” What she said in that committee deliberation is that there are five old cases of Zika in the Philippines acquired abroad but diagnosed in the Philippines and one new case of Zika.

I took the Secretary’s word as gospel truth. But what did we hear from the same Secretary this time in the program of Karen Davila? Apparently now, the Secretary changed her position on Zika cases and said that Zika cases are endemic in the Philippines. Apparently, Mr. Speaker, it is not true that the five cases of old Zika cases reported by the Department were acquired abroad. They were apparently acquired in the Philippines and diagnosed abroad. Now, how the Secretary of Health could make this mistake is beyond me. We are talking about a pandemic. And, again, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about testimony given in a congressional hearing. May I know if the good Sponsor, although I realize that he is not the Secretary of Health, may I know any justifiable reason the Secretary of Health would flip-flop on an issue as serious as a pandemic in this country.

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the carrier of the Zika virus as well as the carrier of the dengue virus is the same carrier. It is the same mosquito which bites different individuals within the country. The Secretary meant to say, Your Honor, that there was local transmission but not endemic in the Philippines, the new Zika virus found, Your Honor.

REP. ROQUE (H.). But the point, Mr. Speaker, is not whether or not Zika carriers and dengue carriers are different. We all know that they are almost the same. The difference is that Zika causes birth defects whereas ordinary dengue does not. That is why, my point, Mr. Speaker, is why would the Secretary of Health flip-flop on the issue of whether or not the Zika virus is endemic or not in this country?

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, the Secretary meant that what is endemic is the carrier of the Zika virus which is the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). So, I take it, Mr. Speaker. Again, I realized that the Sponsor is not the Secretary of Health, that the Secretary of Health will again deny that we now have the birth defects caused by the Zika virus in the Philippines as early as a couple of years ago. I cannot even pronounce that disease in newborn babies, some highfaluting term, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LANETE. Microcephaly, Your Honor.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Micro—yes, that is the term.

We have had this in the Philippines as early as three years ago and that is why the pronouncement now is that it is not just the carrier that is endemic; it is the Zika virus that is endemic because we have had reported births as mentioned by the good Sponsor.

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, it does not mean that if children have microcephaly or they have small heads, it is directly caused by the Zika virus. There are other causes for microcephaly not mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). So, may I know from the Sponsor the position of the Department of Health. Is she still not certain if Zika is endemic in the Philippines?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, after talking with the Department, it was just established within the week that the Zika virus is, indeed, endemic in the Philippines. Category 2, for your information, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Thank you for that statement because I believe that the proper way to deal with a pandemic such as the Zika virus is to be truthful as to the exact penetration of the virus, and whether or not it is endemic or simply imported into the country.

Now, outside of dengue vaccines, I understand that we also now face a shortage in other vaccines. Will the good Sponsor confirm this, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). May I know what steps the Department of Health—well, may I know first, Mr. Speaker, why, in the first place, we allowed ourselves to be in this position where there is now a possible shortage of invaluable vaccines intended for our countrymen?

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, for that question.

In the previous years, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the honorable Gentleman is correct that we have had shortcomings with regard to the vaccine program. However, this year, it has already been rectified so that the Department can already cover all cases of the vaccine program, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). I am happy to hear that, Mr. Speaker, because I am in possession of a letter from an official of the World Health Organization expressing frustration over the fact that time and time again, they have attempted to contact the Secretary about the critical shortage of vaccines in this country with no action undertaken by the Secretary.

May I know, from the Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, why the Secretary of Health of the Republic of the Philippines could not even attend to an urgent communication from a high-ranking officer of the World Health Organization?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, may I ask the honorable Gentleman for the date of the letter given him.

REP. ROQUE (H.). It is within the year of 2016, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LANETE. The date, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). I do not have the date right now but I can provide this plenary body with a copy of the letter, if necessary.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

After consulting with the Department and the Secretary, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the Secretary mentioned that she is not aware of any letter regarding WHO requirements asking her for specific data and answers on policy, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Mr. Speaker, that to me is even more worrisome because I would not have been contacted by that WHO official if they had access to the Secretary of Health to begin with. I only know that WHO official because of my involvement in the field of international law.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Now, Mr. Speaker, which leads me to my last point, President Rodrigo Duterte mentioned in his SONA that one of his legislative priorities is to provide universal healthcare for all Filipinos. But my question, Mr. Speaker, is: Does the good Secretary of Health share in this vision of the President? Because in the Committee deliberations on the Department of Health budget, the last statement of the Secretary was that universal healthcare is a dream. The President, Mr. Speaker, did not say that he is dreaming of a universal healthcare. He said, “I will provide universal healthcare for all Filipinos.”

So, may I know from the Sponsor, does the Secretary of Health share in the vision of the President to provide universal healthcare and within the term of the President?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, this is slowly becoming into a reality and the Department fully supports the agenda of this current administration starting this year, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, until the next years ahead.

REP. ROQUE (H.). May I know if the good Secretary is cognizant of the pending bills in the House of Representatives providing for the exact same thing that the President wants, universal healthcare?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). And may we know if we can expect the cooperation and support of the Secretary of the Department of Health for these pending bills to provide universal healthcare for all Filipinos.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. You have the Department’s assurance of their cooperation, support, and provision of technical personnel, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ROQUE (H.). I have no further questions, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you to the good Sponsor. Good evening.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ALONTE-NAGUIAT. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from ACT TEACHERS Party-List, Rep. Antonio L. Tinio.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The distinguished Gentleman from ACT TEACHERS Party-List, Representative Tinio, is recognized.

REP. TINIO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, kung maaari po, isang tanong lamang sa kagalang-galang na Isponsor ng badyet ng Department of Health. Maaari po bang magtanong?

REP. LANETE. Definitely, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TINIO. Maraming salamat.

Isang tanong lang po, ngunit napakahalagang tanong po ito. Binanggit din natin ang isyu na ito sa unang araw ng debate kaugnay sa health agenda at sa badyet ng Department of Health ng kasalukuyang administrasyon, at kung paano ito nasasalamain o hindi nasasalamain sa sinumiteng badyet ng Malacañang.

Matagal na pong adbokasiya ng Kinatawag ito at ng Makabayan bloc, ng mga kasamahan namin dito ng mga progressive party-lists ang karapatan sa kalusugan ng mamamayang Pilipino, lalo na ang libreng serbisyong pangkalusugan para sa mga mahihirap. At si Pangulong Duterte mismo, sa ilang mga pahayag niya at sa kanyang health agenda, ay nagpahayag din ng ganoon, na nais niya ng libreng serbisyo sa mga government hospitals para sa mga maralitang pasyente.

Subalit nabahala po kami nang sa pagsusuri namin sa badyet ng health sector at ng DOH at tiningnan natin particularly iyong operating budget, iyong MOOE ng mga national government hospitals na nasa ilalim ng DOH. So, all in all, 70 po. Kasama po rito iyong mga regional hospitals, iyong mga specialty hospitals, at isinama din namin, although technically hindi kasama sa badyet ng DOH, iyong sa badyet ng mga GOCC hospitals.

Nabahala po tayo na out of the 70, 68 po ay may malaking cut sa MOOE sa kanilang operating budget, iyong badyet para sa araw-araw na pagpapatakbo ng mga ospital. All in all, sa aming pagsusuri, umaabot sa around P1.5 bilyon po ang magiging kaltas sa badyet sa MOOE ng mga national government hospitals na ito. So, natural po, tayo ay nabahala dahil kung gusto natin ng libreng serbisyong pangkalusugan ng mga government hospitals, lalo na para sa maralita, ito ay hindi pupuwedeng bawasan. Kailangan pa ngang dagdagan ang mga operating budget ng mga ospital natin.

So, dahil dito, pinangunahan po natin sa Makabayan bloc ang isang kampanya kahit sa hanay ng mga kasamahan natin, especially iyong mga district Representatives. Kasi, iyong mga ospital sa kanilang distrito, iyong mga national government hospitals sa kanilang distrito, matatamaan ng budget cut, at alam ko na mararamdaman ng mga Representatives natin iyong epekto nito sa mga constituents nila.

Kaya po, mayroon tayong ipinaikot na petisyon para tutulan ang hospital budget cuts na ito, at para sa minimum ay ibalik ng Kongresong ito iyong MOOE, iyong halaga na tinanggal sa minimum at dapat pa nga

dagdagan. At sa ngayon ay mayroon nang 100 na mga kasamahan tayo rito na pumirma sa petisyong iyan.

We never expected the increase in the number ng mga uremia patients, hindi po ba? I mean, suddenly, it surged. Ang dami na nating mga kababayan nagkakasakit sa kidney. Gaya ng sinabi natin, the kidney problem seems to be a kidney ng mayayaman, sapagkat kapag ikaw ay mahirap and you cannot undertake the normal requirement of dialysis of maybe three times a week, at once or twice a month lang ang kaya mo, on the second month, magkukulay asogi ka na, you will turn grayish.

Kaya, ang kaisa-isang tanong ko po ngayong gabi ay, handa po ba ang Sponsor na itigil po ang cut na ito at ibalik sa mga national government hospitals ang halagang ibinawas sa proposed budget? Puwede po bang ibalik ito, Mr. Speaker, at kagalang-galang na Sponsor?

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was confused earlier, Mr. Speaker, because I cannot understand Tagalog as much as I understand my native tounge. And since our good friend, Honorable Tinio, is very fluent in Tagalog, if you would, Mr. Speaker, I can, I do believe I can answer more properly in my native tongue, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TINIO. Please do.

REP. LANETE. Salamat sa imohang pangutana, honorable Gentleman. Sa niaging tuig ang gibuhat sa Department of Health, ilang gi-propose ang kaning badyet nila na mas dako pa ang ilahang pondo kumpara sa una. Ug tinuod, sakit ang ilahang buot na giputol ang ilahang pondo labina sa kanilang MOOE. Sa katinuoray, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, 10 porsyento ang gi bawas sa ilaha. Ug wala sila makauyon ani kay tungod mauni ang gihatag sa ilaha pag abot sa NEP.

Pero karon, karon, Mr. Speaker, honorable Gentleman, ang ganahang nilang buhaton kay para matubag ang imohang concern o concern sa Department o concern pud na sa entero katauhan, ang buhaton nila, butangan nila gikan sa central office ang imohang giputana, Mr. Speaker, honorable Gentleman. So, ang ilaang ginahang buhaton, i-restore ang kaning pondoha. Pasalamat gani kuno ang Department, Mr. Speaker, honorable Gentleman, na gitagaan nimo sila higayon para mabati nimo ang ilahang tingog parte ani butanga. Kay tungod dili sila ganahan i-budget cut, labina gyud ang kaning programa sa health na importante kayo muhatag. We have to give back to the community.

Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, so salamat sa imohang pangutana ug mao ni ang tubag sa Department na ganahan sila ibalik sa atong mga ospital ang kanang MOOE gikan sa central office na pondo, Mr. Speaker, honorable Gentleman. *(Applause)*

REP. TINIO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. At, to be honest, hindi po talaga ako Visayan speaker, pero naintindihan ko iyon. Ibalik, ibalik sa mga ospital ang kanilang budget. So, ilinaw lang po natin, let us make it clear, can we commit—is there a rock-solid, firm, and unbreakable commitment from the Sponsor that the MOOE that has been cut, the amount that has been cut from the MOOE of national government hospitals, will be restored by this Congress, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. TINIO. Yes. So, malinaw na malinaw po sa tatlong lenggwahe na ibabalik ng Kongresong ito ang ibinawas na halaga ng MOOE. Kaya, nagpapasalamat po tayo sa Committee on Appropriations, sa Sponsor, sa Chair, sa House leadership, dahil tumindig po at pinakinggan ang panawagan ng mamamayan, lalo ng maralita, na kailangang dagdagan at hindi bawasan ang badyet para sa health sector at lalo na sa ating mga public hospitals.

Malaki pa po ang laban. Sabi nga po, pangarap ang libreng serbisyong pangkalusugan para sa lahat ng Pilipino at malayo pa po tayo roon. Pero ngayong gabi po ay mayroon tayong isang tagumpay sa pamamagitan ng pagkilos ng Kongresong ito.

So, muli, maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, at Mr. Sponsor. Magandang gabi po.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ALONTE-NAGUIAT. Mr. Speaker, may I move for a suspension of the session for one minute.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved. The session is suspended.

It was 7:44 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 7:48 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ALONTE-NAGUIAT. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Third District of Quezon, Representative Danilo E. Suarez.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The distinguished Gentleman from the Third District of Quezon, the Minority Floor Leader, Representative Suarez, is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

May I know why there seems to be a reduction on the proposed budget for 2017 as compared to 2016. Is that correct?

REP. LANETE. No, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. As a matter of fact, there is an increase by...

REP. SUAREZ. Mas malaki ang budget ng 2017 kaysa sa 2016.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. However, I think the decrease which the honorable Gentleman is talking about is in the MOOEs of the different national hospitals Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Nandoon pa ba iyong signage ninyo doon sa office ng Department of Health na nakasulat, “Health is Wealth”? Nandoon pa ba? Di ba may nakasulat dati doon sa office ng Secretary, “Health is Wealth”? I am just wondering, is it still there?

REP. LANETE. No more, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Inalis na iyong “Health is Wealth”?

REP. LANETE. Yes, but still, we believe in the fact, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. I will go to specifics because I think everybody is itching to go home.

We have a case in my parochial concern, the province of Quezon, we have a Quezon Medical Center designed for 250 beds capacity, and every day, the average number of patients is about 500 to 600, every day. So, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, opening hours pa lang, tense na ang empleyado, tense ang doktor, tense ang nurses, tense ang staff, dahil sa puno kaagad iyong mga gustong magpagamot, plus the fact, doon sa hallway, sa corridor, mayroong mga bonbon, nandoon na ang mga pasyente. Ano ang magagawang tulong ng Department of Health sa mga ganoong problema na hindi lang nangyayari sa lalawigan ng Quezon at nangyayari din sa buong Pilipinas?

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the Department also shares the sentiment of the honorable Gentleman.

REP. SUAREZ. The answer is sentiment. That is the health.

REP. LANETE. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, I am just trying to make an introduction, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, before I move to the answer, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Please, go ahead.

REP. LANETE. Yes. While the Department shares the sentiment of the honorable Minority Leader, the central office from the Department of Health, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, is allocating P25 million in assistance to the Quezon Medical Center, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. What is that, cash allocation given to the provincial government? How is it being implemented?

REP. LANETE. This will be divided into infrastructure and equipment, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Proposal for 2017.

REP. LANETE. That is for 2017, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. What will be the infrastructure that is being proposed by the Department?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SUAREZ. I move for a one-minute suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The session is suspended.

It was 7:54 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 7:56 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Your Honor, the P20-million allocation for Quezon Medical Center will be used to create a new ward. Another ward will be created, and this will accommodate 50 new patients.

REP. SUAREZ. Fifteen ...

REP. LANETE. Five-zero, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. For P20 million.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker. That is the ...

REP. SUAREZ. The distinguished Sponsor is a seasoned legislator and very familiar with public works. Do you believe that P20 million can suffice for 50 rooms, 50-bed capacity?

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, this Representation is not as well versed with regard to infrastructure. However, the P20 million will be used to create a ward, and it will house 50 more beds, Mr. Speaker, and not rooms, Your Honor. It will just be an open structure and beds will be placed along the corridors, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. May I know if one of the officers here, with your principal, has visited Quezon Medical Center.

REP. LANETE. The regional technical staff are here, Your Honor, honorable Gentleman, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. I visited that hospital though it is not in my district. But I can see the tension, distinguished Sponsor. Is the distinguished Sponsor a doctor?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, iyon po, Doc, pagpasok mo ng iyong hospital, it can handle 250 patients, 250 beds e. On an average, 550 to 600 ang kanilang tini-treat araw-araw. You can imagine the tension, the movement, and the frustration. For that, hindi mo maiiwasan na lahat iinit ang ulo, iinit ang ulo ng mga doktor, iinit ang ulo ng nars, iinit ang ulo ng pasyente. We are saying that the problem is not just local like mine. It is local to all of the Members of the House. You are saying that for 2017, the remedial solution of the Department of Health is to ask for how many billions, Mr. Speaker? How much are they asking for 2017?

REP. LANETE. P144 billion, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Is that P20 million for the construction of a new ward, that will be, you said, enough to house additional 50-bed capacity?

REP. LANETE. You are right, Mr. Speaker. It cannot be commensurate to the needs of the population.

REP. SUAREZ. So, what do you think can we do further, for instance, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

The Gentleman is right in saying that the Quezon Medical Center is not just one of the medical centers which has the overwhelming plight of patients today. This particular center is run by the provincial government.

REP. SUAREZ. I know, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LANETE. However, the DOH tries to cater and provide to the needs of the entire nation, as much as each individual hospital is concerned, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. It is true that the influx of new cases of different diseases has taken a big toll on the DOH.

The Department is the prime government unit which takes care of the health system of the country as a whole. That is why it wants to address this problem by adding additional hospital units, personnel, equipment, to the different regions in the country. As a matter of fact, the Secretary has mentioned that there would be a regional specialized hospital in the Visayas and the Mindanao area, most especially with the four specialized hospitals specifically the NKTi, the Lung Center, the Heart Center and the PCMC. This is one of the ways in which they can combat or target the indigents that are in need, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. The noble objective of the Department is beyond debate. But what I am saying, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, ang gagawin nilang mga remedial measure is that they are asking for several billions for next year, and yet, the reality is that lahat ng bayan at probinsiya ay may problema sa kalusugan. Kung sasabihin po ninyo sa akin, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, wala pa silang MRI o mayroon nang kabibilang bagong Siemens na CT scan with the use of the provincial funds, pero ang MRI ay para sa buong lalawigan, so we have to go to Manila. Hindi ba napakagandang makita man lang namin sa programa ng DOH na ang malalaking medical centers ay malagyan ng MRI.

REP. LANETE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Gentleman.

The Department tries to take care of all the healthcare needs of the population. However, even with the P140 billion plus for next year, it still cannot be enough to equitably distribute systems across the nation just because of the magnitude of the healthcare problems.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, let us call a spade a spade. Mayroong nakapakaraming pasyente na kailangang i-dialysis. Ang dialysis 24/7 na, hindi po ba? Wala ba kayong nakikita sa programa

ng DOH to augment dialysis machines in district hospitals or even medical centers. Mayroon po ba, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is.

REP. SUAREZ. Saan po, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the equipment counterpart for this Quezon Medical Center for next year would be two dialysis machines, two ventilators and a patient cardiac monitor, apart from the financial aid that would be coming from PhilHealth.

REP. SUAREZ. Financial aid coming from where, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. From PhilHealth, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Distinguished Sponsor, is your principal aware of the program being undertaken, though this is parochial again, the 1000-day care for supposedly pregnant women, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the program which encompasses the first 1,000 days of maternity.

REP. SUAREZ. First 1,000 days of maternity. We are doing it. Can the Department give assistance to that?

REP. LANETE. Of course, definitely, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. In what form, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LANETE. The Department has assured this Representation, Mr. Speaker, that it will support the program by giving commodities such as medicines, vaccines and vitamins and medical and technical services for this program.

REP. SUAREZ. Who will implement it, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor? I mean, we are doing it but what will be the participation of the DOH?

REP. LANETE. The personnel coming from the DOH, specifically the nurses, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleague, will be administering the program.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, we have a small community hospital in my hometown, maybe one of your assistants can tell, is this correct that the amount allocated to operate that community hospital for one year is P20 million? Unisan Community Hospital, it

is a 20-bed hospital that we have expanded. It used to be a 10-bed hospital and we expanded it by adding 10 more. We set up a nurses' and a doctors' station using Congressional funds before.

REP. LANETE. That is correct, Mr. Speaker. The estimate from the Department is P1 million per bed, per year.

REP. SUAREZ. Ang mga district hospital po ba have not been given to the local government unit o nasa ilalim pa ng DOH?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is correct, to the LGU.

REP. SUAREZ. The local government unit.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. So kung lahat po ay sa local government unit at alam naman nating devolved na pero nakikita naman natin ang problema, can the distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, tinker again with the proposed budget and come up with some remedial adjustment? For instance, as I have said, how much is an MRI?

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the current price of an MRI is around P150 million.

REP. SUAREZ. Nakapagbigay na ba ang DOH ng MRI sa isang ospital?

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, yes, to specialty hospitals like the NKTi, Lung Center, Heart Center and PCMC.

REP. SUAREZ. Lahat po iyan ay may MRI? Siguraduhin po natin kasi kami ay nagre-refer ng pasyente in those hospitals and ang sinasabi po sa amin, wala silang MRI.

REP. LANETE. After conferring with the Department, Mr. Speaker, the Secretary has said yes that there are MRI units in these specialty hospitals.

REP. SUAREZ. Ano po ang magagawa ng Department of Health, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor sa plight nating mga Mambabatas, sapagkat wala naman tayong DAP o PDAF? Ano ang immediate reaction na magagawa nila kung tayo ay mayroong mga pasyenteng nangangailangan ng tulong?

REP. LANETE. They will accommodate all patients, Mr. Speaker. All indigent patients which

undergo scrutiny by the DSWD will be enrolled in the program, admitted and will be given medical support and help for each individual needs, Mr. Speaker. Also, all indigent patients are enrolled in PhilHealth, and the PhilHealth has already implemented the "No Balance Billing" for the year, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, in terms of PhilHealth, I just would like to inform the Sponsor that the provincial government spends its money for members as well. Ang hindi po nila kayang bayaran, we share to be a member of PhilHealth. Kung iyon po ang magiging sagot natin, iaasa natin sa PhilHealth lahat. For instance, PhilHealth member ka nga pero bibigyan ka ng numero, ilang beses ka lang puwedeng mag-dialysis sa loob ng isang taon, which we know ay kulang na kulang.

REP. LANETE. Mr. Speaker, when indigents come in and are not yet enrolled in the membership of PhilHealth, the hospitals are issued or the hospitals will administer the Point of Care Program wherein when a patient gets sick, they will enroll the patient right there and then.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, are the Heart Center of the Philippines, the Lung Center of the Philippines, the National Orthopedic Hospital, and the Philippine Children's Medical Center under the care of the Department of Health?

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. All of them?

REP. LANETE. All of the mentioned hospitals, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SUAREZ. May I request for a suspension of the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is suspended.

It was 8:13 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 8:17 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The session is resumed.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, we have some parochial problem in our community hospital and district hospital. For instance, we only have an

anesthesiologist that can go to hospitals on a certain day of the week. I do not know whether the Department of Health can assist in this particular area of having specialist doctors along that line. Ang problema po, sabihin na nating ang mga buntis kapag umiri, dama nila ang sakit, ayaw nila mag-labor nang matagal sa ospital, gusto caesarian kaagad. Kapag ise-caesarian we need an anesthesiologist. Mahina ang P80,000 kapag caesarian at hindi po lahat ng pasyente, kayang magbayad ng P80,000 for a caesarian procedure.

Maybe we can ask the distinguished Sponsor to give some assurance that in the proposed budget of the Department of Health, this problem that we are experiencing, considering that Quezon is a premier, first-class province, itong mga constituent natin sa second o third class provinces might be having most serious problem than what we are having, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, iyon po ang problema, kulang tayo sa mga anesthesiologists. I think I cannot see a solution overnight on that, but maybe we can pass it on to the good Secretary.

REP. LANETE. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Thank you for that. The good Secretary has, after conferring with her, stated that the DOH will get from the medical pool team of specialists, specifically anesthesiologists. At the same time, they would study the situation in your area, in your district, as to what other fields of specialization or specialists are needed so that they can address the medical health problem in your area.

REP. SUAREZ. For my last question, Mr. Speaker, does the Sponsor believe in faith healers?

Maybe the Department can augment some money for a good faith healer for cases that are beyond medical assistance. Just kidding because—no, no, you do not have to reply, nagbibiro lang ako.

Mr. Speaker, there is no more Member of the Minority who would like to raise questions on the proposed budget for the Department of Health including their attached agencies. I move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. ALONTE-NAGUIAT. On behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period

of interpellation and debate on the budget of Department of Health.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). There is a joint motion from the Majority and the Minority to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Department of Health.

Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of Department of Health is hereby terminated.

Congratulations Secretary Ubial. (*Applause*)

The Dep Majority Leader is recognized

RECONSIDERATION OF REFERRAL OF HOUSE BILL NO. 40

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, with leave of the House, I move that we reconsider the referral of House Bill No. 40 to the Committee on Agriculture and Food, and refer it to the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move for the approval of Journal No. 31 of October 3, 2016.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, October 5, at ten o'clock in the morning.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Hernandez). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is adjourned and to resume tomorrow, October 5, at ten o'clock in the morning.

It was 8:22 p.m.