



Congressional Record

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House of Representatives

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No. 36

CALL TO ORDER

At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo called the session to order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Macapagal-Arroyo). The session is called to order.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Macapagal-Arroyo). Please rise for the National Anthem.

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Macapagal-Arroyo). Please remain standing for a moment of silent prayer and meditation.

Everybody remained standing for the silent prayer.

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Rolando G. Andaya Jr.

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

REP. BELARO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we defer the calling of the roll.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). There is a motion to defer the calling of the roll.

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

REP. BELARO. Mr. Speaker, I move for the deferment of the approval of the Journal of the previous session.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). There is a motion to defer the approval of the Journal of the previous session.

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

REP. BELARO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Reference of Business.

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

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 3953, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE CONVERGENCE STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDING THE IMPLEMENTING MECHANISMS THEREFORE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Kho

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 3954, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL BICYCLE PROGRAM AND AN INTEGRATED NETWORK OF BICYCLE LANES”

By Representative Velasco-Catera

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 3956, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE IMPOSITION OF FEES FOR THE USE OF PARKING SPACES

AND FACILITIES IN SHOPPING MALLS, HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS AND SIMILAR ESTABLISHMENTS, INCLUDING VACANT LOTS USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR PARKING AND PRESCRIBING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF”

By Representative Gatchalian
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 3957, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CONVERSION OF LINGUNAN TO LAWANG BATO ROAD, IN THE CITY OF VALENZUELA, METRO MANILA INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Gatchalian
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3958, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING LOCAL CHIEF EXECUTIVES JOINT AUTHORITY WITH THE BUREAU OF FIRE PROTECTION IN THE APPOINTMENT OF FIRE MARSHALS AND DISCIPLINE OF PERSONNEL IN THEIR RESPECTIVE JURISDICTIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PERTINENT PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1990’”

By Representative Gatchalian
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3959, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS ENROLLING IN TEACHER EDUCATION AND PROVIDING INCENTIVES FOR TEACHING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS”

By Representative Gatchalian
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 3960, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL NANAY TEACHER PARENTING PROGRAM TO STRENGTHEN PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Gatchalian
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3961, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THAT ‘THE BILL OF RIGHTS’ BE A COMPULSORY SUBJECT FOR ALL STUDENTS IN THE SECONDARY LEVEL IN ALL PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS”

By Representative Gatchalian
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3962, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE CONTINUOUS EDUCATION ON ILLEGAL DRUGS BE A PART OF THE CURRICULUM OF ALL SECONDARY LEVEL STUDENTS BOTH IN PRIVATE AND IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS”

By Representative Gatchalian
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3963, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING HAZING AND REGULATING OTHER FORMS OF INITIATION RITES OF FRATERNITIES, SORORITIES, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8049”

By Representative Gatchalian
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 3964, entitled:

“AN ACT RENAMING CO TEK CHUN NATIONAL TRADE SCHOOL TO TIGUMA NATIONAL AGRI-INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE”

By Representative Yu
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 3965, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING ALL CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES TO INFORM ALL BARANGAYS WITHIN THEIR JURISDICTION OF ALL LAWS PASSED BY CONGRESS AND APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT”

By Representative Roman
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3966, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING ALL PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS TO ESTABLISH, OPERATE

AND MAINTAIN AN INTENSIVE CARE UNIT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE PROVINCIAL HOSPITALS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Roman
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3967, entitled:

“AN ACT PROTECTING FILIPINO MOTHERS AND CHILDREN FROM MALNUTRITION BY ESTABLISHING A MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CARE PROGRAM, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Antonio
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3968, entitled:

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

By Representative Herrera-Dy
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN

House Bill No. 3969, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PRIVATE HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO PRIVATE HOSPITALS BY GRANTING OF INCENTIVES”

By Representative Herrera-Dy
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3970, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE, PROVINCE OF BULACAN A SUSTAINABLE CITY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Robes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3971, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 3720, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘FOOD DRUG AND COSMETIC ACT,’ AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9711, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION ACT OF 2009’ ”

By Representative Leachon
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3972, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS TO DISCLOSE AND DISPLAY THE NUTRITIONAL CONTENT INFORMATION OF FOOD ON THEIR MENUS AND MENU BOARDS”

By Representative Leachon
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3973, entitled:

“AN ACT LOWERING THE MINIMUM AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9344 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘JUVENILE JUSTICE AND WELFARE ACT OF 2006’ ”

By Representative Suansing (E.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 3974, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A DRUG REHABILITATION CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF RIZAL, IN THE PROVINCE OF KALINGA, TO BE KNOWN AS THE KALINGA DRUG REHABILITATION CENTER AND ALLOCATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Mangaoang
TO THE COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS DRUGS

House Bill No. 3975, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6848, ALSO KNOWN AS ‘CHARTER OF AL-AMANAH ISLAMIC INVESTMENT BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES’, AND PROVIDING FOR THE REGULATION AND ORGANIZATION OF AN EXPANDED ISLAMIC BANKING SYSTEM IN THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Macapagal-Arroyo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

House Bill No. 3976, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING DRUG TESTS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND NON-PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 36 OF REPUBLIC ACT 9165, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE COMPREHENSIVE DANGEROUS DRUGS ACT OF 2002 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Macapagal-Arroyo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON DANGEROUS DRUGS

House Bill No. 3977, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING THE USE OF AEROPONICS TECHNOLOGY TO BE APPLIED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION OF HIGH VALUE-ADDED CROPS AND VEGETABLE FARMING TO ADDRESS THE COUNTRY’S FOOD SECURITY CONCERNS AND JUDICIOUSLY UTILIZE SCARCE FERTILE LAND RESOURCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Macapagal-Arroyo
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 3978, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE PHILIPPINE COMPREHENSIVE POLICY ON HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV) AND ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS) PREVENTION, TREATMENT, CARE AND SUPPORT, AND ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL HIV AND AIDS PLAN, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8504, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘PHILIPPINE AIDS PREVENTION AND CONTROL ACT OF 1998’, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Villarín
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 3979, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING TWO PARCELS OF LANDS OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN LOCATED IN THE CITY OF NAGA, PROVINCE OF CEBU AS AGRICULTURAL LAND OPEN TO DISPOSITION FOR AGRICULTURAL, RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL OR OTHER PRODUCTIVE PURPOSES”

By Representative Gullas
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

House Bill No. 3980, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING ‘TANGLAWAN FESTIVAL’ AS AN OFFICIAL FESTIVAL IN THE CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE, BULACAN AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Robes
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3981, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING OCTOBER 5 OF EVERY YEAR AS NATIONAL TEACHERS DAY”

By Representative Belaro

TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS AND THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 3982, entitled:

“AN ACT MERGING THE PHILIPPINE CARABAO CENTER AND THE NATIONAL DAIRY AUTHORITY INTO THE PHILIPPINE DAIRY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY TO PROVIDE GREATER FOCUS ON THE ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAIRY INDUSTRY AND TO INCREASE PRODUCTION OF DAIRY ANIMALS IN THE PHILIPPINES, PROVIDING FOR A RUMINANTS DEVELOPMENT FUND THEREFORE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Aglipay-Villar
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 3983, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BY INSTITUTIONALIZING A TEN PERCENT (10%) ALLOCATION FROM THEIR INTERNAL REVENUE ALLOTMENT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES FOR AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES ADVANCEMENT AND AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 17, 106, 107, 110, 287, 443, 454, AND 482(a), 511(a), OF REPUBLIC ACT 7160 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Aglipay-Villar
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3984, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL CROP PROTECTION PROGRAM, CREATING THE PHILIPPINE CROP PROTECTION AGENCY BY CONSOLIDATING THE DISPARATE CROP PROTECTION, QUARANTINE AND PEST MANAGEMENT EFFORTS, ACTIVITIES, AND AGENCIES, INTO A HOLISTIC AND INTEGRATED SERVICE TO PROMOTE THE SUSTAINABILITY AND GREATER PRODUCTIVITY OF THE PHILIPPINE AGRICULTURE SECTOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Aglipay-Villar
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
AND FOOD

House Bill No. 3985, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING THE SCIENTIFIC
PROPAGATION, PROCESSING,
UTILIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF
PHILIPPINE NATIVE ANIMALS, HEREBY
CREATING THE PHILIPPINE NATIVE
ANIMAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER”

By Representative Aglipay-Villar
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
AND FOOD

House Bill No. 3986, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE LAND
TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO)
LOCATED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF
BALAYAN, PROVINCE OF BATANGAS,
INTO A REGULAR LTO DISTRICT OFFICE
TO BE KNOWN AS THE LTO DISTRICT
OFFICE OF BALAYAN, BATANGAS,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Ermita-Buhain
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 3987, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SATELLITE
OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL BUREAU
OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF MAIMBUNG,
PROVINCE OF SULU AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Tan (S.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 3989, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTING BUDGET REFORMS
TO ENSURE THE EQUITABLE
DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS TO LOCAL
GOVERNMENT UNITS FOR THE
PURPOSE OF PROMOTING LOCAL
EMPOWERMENT, ENABLING THEM
TO BE AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT
IN ATTAINING INCLUSIVE GROWTH,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Almario
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 3990, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE ROAD
STRETCHING FROM JUNCTION

ZAMBOANGA CITY LABUAN LIMPAPA
NATIONAL HIGHWAY SINUBONG
SECTION TO BARANGAYS PAMUCUTAN,
LAPAZ, TULUNGATUNG, CAWIT, MAASIN,
SINUNUC, MALAGUTAY, CABATANGAN,
PASONANCA, TUMAGA, LUNZURAN,
LUMBANGAN, BOALAN, PASOBOLONG
AND CULIANAN UP TO JUNCTION MARIA
CLARA LOBREGAT NATIONAL HIGHWAY
ALL IN ZAMBOANGA CITY INTO A
NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Lobregat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3991, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE ROAD
STRETCHING FROM JUNCTION
ZAMBOANGA CITY LABUAN LIMPAPA
NATIONAL HIGHWAY IN BARANGAY
AYALA TO BARANGAY LA PAZ (NANCY
FALLS) ALL IN ZAMBOANGA CITY INTO A
NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Lobregat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3992, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE CITY ROAD
STRETCHING FROM DR. VARELA STREET
ZAMBOANGA CITY CONNECTING
JUNCTION ZAMBOANGA CITY LABUAN
TO LIMPAPA NATIONAL HIGHWAY
SAN JOSE SECTION TO JUNCTION R.T.
LIM BOULEVARD IN ZAMBOANGA
CITY INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Lobregat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3993, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE CITY ROAD
STRETCHING FROM ALEJO ALVAREZ
STREET IN ZAMBOANGA CITY CONNECTING
JUNCTION ZAMBOANGA CITY LABUAN
TO LIMPAPA NATIONAL HIGHWAY SAN
JOSE SECTION TO JUNCTION R.T. LIM
BOULEVARD IN ZAMBOANGA CITY INTO
A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Lobregat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3994, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE CITY ROAD STRETCHING FROM C.A. FERNANDEZ ROAD (BALIWASAN CHICO ROAD) IN BARANGAY BALIWASAN IN ZAMBOANGA CITY CONNECTING JUNCTION ZAMBOANGA CITY LABUAN TO LIMPAPA NATIONAL HIGHWAY BALIWASAN SECTION AND JUNCTION R.T. LIM BOULEVARD IN ZAMBOANGA CITY INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Lobregat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 3995, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE CITY ROAD STRETCHING FROM T. TAUPAN ROAD IN SUTTERVILLE BARANGAY CAMPO ISLAM ZAMBOANGA CITY CONNECTING JUNCTION ZAMBOANGA CITY LABUAN LIMPAPA NATIONAL HIGHWAY SAN JOSE GUSU SECTION TO JUNCTION R.T. LIM BOULEVARD IN ZAMBOANGA CITY INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Lobregat
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

ADDITIONAL COAUTHORS

Rep. Marlyn L. Primicias-Agabas for House Bills No. 3661, 3663, 3746 and 3820;

Reps. Emmi A. De Jesus, Johnny Ty Pimentel and Divina Grace C. Yu for House Resolution No. 393;

Reps. Carlos O. Cojuangco and Rosanna “Ria” Vergara for House Bill No. 1859;

Rep. Jose “Pingping” I. Tejada for House Bill No. 555;

Rep. Elisa “Olga” T. Kho for House Bills No. 192, 193, 194, 1302, 2330 and 3771;

Reps. Sharon S. Garin, Ma. Theresa V. Collantes, Ma. Lucille L. Nava, M.D., Cristal L. Bagatsing, Cristina “Chiqui” Roa-Puno, Alexandria P. Gonzales, Christopher “Toff” Vera Perez De Venecia, Benhur B. Lopez Jr., Victoria Isabel G. Noel, Aurora Enerio Cerilles, Glona G. Labadlabad, Celso L. Lobregat, Carlos Roman L. Uybarreta, Julieta R. Cortuna, Tricia Nicole Q. Velasco-Catera, Prospero A. Pichay Jr., Edgar Mary S. Sarmiento, Manuel F. Zubiri, Tom S. Villarín, Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan, Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba, Geraldine B. Roman, Orestes T. Salon, Eric L. Olivarez, Elisa “Olga” T. Kho, Rico B. Geron, Teddy Brawner Baguilat Jr., Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo,

Eugene Michael B. De Vera, Anthony M. Bravo, Ph.D., Ansaruddin A.M. A. Adiong, Sabiniano S. Canama, Florencio T. Flores Jr., M.D., Maximo B. Rodriguez Jr., Emmanuel F. Madrona, Gil “Kabarangay” P. Acosta, Rogelio “Ruel” D. Pacquiao, Jorge T. Almonte, Leo Rafael M. Cueva, Abigail Faye C. Ferriol-Pascual, Emmanuel A. Billones, Pia S. Cayetano, Corazon T. Nuñez-Malanyaon and Ruwel Peter S. Gonzaga for House Bill No. 2983;

Reps. Sharon S. Garin, Ma. Theresa V. Collantes, Ma. Lucille L. Nava, M.D., Cristal L. Bagatsing, Vini Nola A. Ortega, Cristina “Chiqui” Roa-Puno, Alexandria P. Gonzales, Christopher “Toff” Vera Perez De Venecia, Benhur B. Lopez Jr., Victoria Isabel G. Noel, Aurora Enerio Cerilles, Glona G. Labadlabad, Celso L. Lobregat, Carlos Roman L. Uybarreta, Julieta R. Cortuna, Tricia Nicole Q. Velasco-Catera, Prospero A. Pichay Jr., Edgar Mary S. Sarmiento, Roger G. Mercado, Tom S. Villarín, Jose “Pingping” I. Tejada, Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan, Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba, Geraldine B. Roman, Orestes T. Salon, Eric L. Olivarez, Rico B. Geron, Teddy Brawner Baguilat Jr., Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo, Ansaruddin A.M. A. Adiong, Eugene Michael B. De Vera, Anthony M. Bravo, Ph.D., Sabiniano S. Canama, Florencio T. Flores Jr., M.D., Maximo B. Rodriguez Jr., Emmanuel F. Madrona, Gil “Kabarangay” P. Acosta, Jonas C. Cortes, Peter John D. Calderon, Rogelio “Ruel” D. Pacquiao, Leo Rafael M. Cueva, Abigail Faye C. Ferriol-Pascual, Emmanuel A. Billones, Wilter “Sharky” Wee Palma II, Pia S. Cayetano and Corazon T. Nuñez Malanyaon for House Bill No. 2985;

Reps. Sharon S. Garin, Ma. Theresa V. Collantes, Ma. Lucille L. Nava, M.D., Cristal L. Bagatsing, Vini Nola A. Ortega, Alexandria P. Gonzales, Christopher “Toff” Vera Perez De Venecia, Victoria Isabel G. Noel, Aurora Enerio Cerilles, Glona G. Labadlabad, Celso L. Lobregat, Carlos Roman L. Uybarreta, Julieta R. Cortuna, Tricia Nicole Q. Velasco-Catera, Prospero A. Pichay Jr., Edgar Mary S. Sarmiento, Manuel F. Zubiri, Tom S. Villarín, Jose “Pingping” I. Tejada, Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan, Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba, Geraldine B. Roman, Orestes T. Salon, Eric L. Olivarez, Elisa “Olga” T. Kho, Rico B. Geron, Teddy Brawner Baguilat Jr., Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo, Eugene Michael B. De Vera, Anthony M. Bravo, Ph.D., Sabiniano S. Canama, Florencio T. Flores Jr., M.D., Maximo B. Rodriguez Jr., Emmanuel F. Madrona, Gil “Kabarangay” P. Acosta, Jonas C. Cortes, Peter John D. Calderon, Rogelio “Ruel” D. Pacquiao, Jorge T. Almonte, Abigail Faye C. Ferriol-Pascual, Emmanuel A. Billones, Wilter “Sharky” Wee Palma II, Pia S. Cayetano, Corazon T. Nuñez-Malanyaon and Ruwel Peter S. Gonzaga for House Bill No. 2984;

Reps. Sharon S. Garin, Ma. Theresa V. Collantes, Ma. Lucille L. Nava, M.D., Cristal L. Bagatsing, Cristina

“Chiqui” Roa-Puno, Alexandria P. Gonzales, Christopher “Toff” Vera Perez De Venecia, Victoria Isabel G. Noel, Benhur B. Lopez Jr., Aurora Enerio Cerilles, Glona G. Labadlabad, Celso L. Lobregat, Carlos Roman L. Uybarreta, Julieta R. Cortuna, Tricia Nicole Q. Velasco-Catera, Prospero A. Pichay Jr., Edgar Mary S. Sarmiento, Jose “Pingping” I. Tejada, Roger G. Mercado, Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan, Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba, Geraldine B. Roman, Orestes T. Salon, Eric L. Olivarez, Rico B. Geron, Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo, Anthony M. Bravo, Ph.D., Sabiniano S. Canama, Maximo B. Rodriguez Jr., Emmanuel F. Madrona, Gil “Kabarangay” P. Acosta, Jonas C. Cortes, Peter John D. Calderon, Rogelio “Ruel” D. Pacquiao, Leo Rafael M. Cueva, Abigail Faye C. Ferriol-Pascual, Emmanuel A. Billones, Corazon T. Nuñez-Malanyaon and Ruwel Peter S. Gonzaga for House Bill No. 3329;

Reps. Sharon S. Garin, Ma. Theresa V. Collantes, Ma. Lucille L. Nava, M.D., Vini Nola A. Ortega, Cristal L. Bagatsing, Cristina “Chiqui” Roa-Puno, Alexandria P. Gonzales, Christopher “Toff” Vera Perez De Venecia, Victoria Isabel G. Noel, Benhur B. Lopez Jr., Aurora Enerio Cerilles, Glona G. Labadlabad, Celso L. Lobregat, Carlos Roman L. Uybarreta, Julieta R. Cortuna, Tricia Nicole Q. Velasco-Catera, Prospero A. Pichay Jr., Edgar Mary S. Sarmiento, Manuel F. Zubiri, Roger G. Mercado, Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan, Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba, Geraldine B. Roman, Orestes T. Salon, Eric L. Olivarez, Rico B. Geron, Eugene Michael B. De Vera, Anthony M. Bravo, Ph.D., Sabiniano S. Canama, Ansaruddin A.M. A. Adiong, Florencio T. Flores Jr., M.D., Maximo B. Rodriguez Jr., Emmanuel F. Madrona, Gil “Kabarangay” P. Acosta, Jonas C. Cortes, Peter John D. Calderon, Rogelio “Ruel” D. Pacquiao, Jorge T. Almonte, Leo Rafael M. Cueva, Abigail Faye C. Ferriol-Pascual, Emmanuel A. Billones, Wilter “Sharky” Wee Palma II, Pia S. Cayetano and Corazon T. Nuñez-Malanyaon for House Bill No. 3640;

Reps. Sharon S. Garin, Ma. Theresa V. Collantes, Ma. Lucille L. Nava, M.D., Cristal L. Bagatsing, Vini Nola A. Ortega, Cristina “Chiqui” Roa-Puno, Alexandria P. Gonzales, Christopher “Toff” Vera Perez De Venecia, Victoria Isabel G. Noel, Benhur B. Lopez Jr., Aurora Enerio Cerilles, Glona G. Labadlabad, Celso L. Lobregat, Carlos Roman L. Uybarreta, Julieta R. Cortuna, Tricia Nicole Q. Velasco-Catera, Prospero A. Pichay Jr., Edgar Mary S. Sarmiento, Roger G. Mercado, Tom S. Villarín, Jose “Pingping” I. Tejada, Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan, Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba, Geraldine B. Roman, Orestes T. Salon, Eric L. Olivarez, Elisa “Olga” T. Kho, Rico B. Geron, Teddy Brawner Baguilat Jr., Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo, Anthony M. Bravo, Ph.D., Sabiniano S. Canama, Florencio T. Flores Jr., M.D., Gil “Kabarangay” P. Acosta, Emmanuel F. Madrona, Jonas C. Cortes, Peter John D. Calderon,

Rogelio “Ruel” D. Pacquiao, Jorge T. Almonte, Leo Rafael M. Cueva, Abigail Faye C. Ferriol-Pascual, Emmanuel A. Billones, Wilter “Sharky” Wee Palma II, Pia S. Cayetano and Corazon T. Nuñez Malanyaon for House Bill No. 3699;

Reps. Sharon S. Garin, Ma. Theresa V. Collantes, Vini Nola A. Ortega, Cristina “Chiqui” Roa-Puno, Alexandria P. Gonzales, Christopher “Toff” Vera Perez De Venecia, Victoria Isabel G. Noel, Benhur B. Lopez Jr., Aurora Enerio Cerilles, Glona G. Labadlabad, Celso L. Lobregat, Carlos Roman L. Uybarreta, Julieta R. Cortuna, Tricia Nicole Q. Velasco-Catera, Prospero A. Pichay Jr., Edgar Mary S. Sarmiento, Manuel F. Zubiri, Roger G. Mercado, Tom S. Villarín, Jose “Pingping” I. Tejada, Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan, Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba, Geraldine B. Roman, Orestes T. Salon, Eric L. Olivarez, Elisa “Olga” T. Kho, Rico B. Geron, Teddy Brawner Baguilat Jr., Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo, Ansaruddin A.M. A. Adiong, Anthony M. Bravo, Ph.D., Sabiniano S. Canama, Maximo B. Rodriguez Jr., Emmanuel F. Madrona, Gil “Kabarangay” P. Acosta, Jonas C. Cortes, Peter John D. Calderon, Rogelio “Ruel” D. Pacquiao, Leo Rafael M. Cueva, Abigail Faye C. Ferriol-Pascual, Emmanuel A. Billones, Wilter “Sharky” Wee Palma II, Corazon T. Nuñez-Malanyaon and Ruwel Peter S. Gonzaga for House Bill No. 3700;

Reps. Sharon S. Garin, Ma. Theresa V. Collantes, Ma. Lucille L. Nava, M.D., Cristal L. Bagatsing, Vini Nola A. Ortega, Cristina “Chiqui” Roa-Puno, Alexandria P. Gonzales, Christopher “Toff” Vera Perez De Venecia, Benhur B. Lopez Jr., Victoria Isabel G. Noel, Aurora Enerio Cerilles, Glona G. Labadlabad, Celso L. Lobregat, Carlos Roman L. Uybarreta, Julieta R. Cortuna, Tricia Nicole Q. Velasco-Catera, Prospero A. Pichay Jr., Edgar Mary S. Sarmiento, Manuel F. Zubiri, Tom S. Villarín, Lorna P. Bautista-Bandigan, Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba, Geraldine B. Roman, Orestes T. Salon, Eric L. Olivarez, Elisa “Olga” T. Kho, Rico B. Geron, Teddy Brawner Baguilat Jr., Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo, Eugene Michael B. De Vera, Anthony M. Bravo, Ph.D., Sabiniano S. Canama, Florencio T. Flores Jr., M.D., Maximo B. Rodriguez Jr., Emmanuel F. Madrona, Gil “Kabarangay” P. Acosta, Jonas C. Cortes, Peter John D. Calderon, Rogelio “Ruel” D. Pacquiao, Leo Rafael M. Cueva, Abigail Faye C. Ferriol-Pascual, Emmanuel A. Billones, Wilter “Sharky” Wee Palma II, Pia S. Cayetano, Corazon T. Nuñez-Malanyaon and Ruwel Peter S. Gonzaga for House Bill No. 3776;

Rep. Ma. Lucille L. Nava, M.D. for House Bill No. 3777;

Rep. Roger G. Mercado for House Bill No. 4011;

Rep. Jonas C. Cortes for House Bill No. 3533;

Rep. Joaquin M. Chipeco Jr. for House Bills No. 3099 and 3514;

Rep. Michelle M. Antonio for House Bills No. 1, 57, 2096 and 3781;

Reps. Rodolfo C. Fariñas, Juan Pablo “Rimpy” P. Bondoc, Oscar “Richard” S. Garin Jr., Vini Nola A. Ortega and Danilo E. Suarez for House Bill No. 3955;

Rep. Michael John R. Duavit for House Bill No. 3457;

Rep. Amado T. Espino Jr. for House Bills No. 3457 and 3458;

Reps. Baby Aline Vargas-Alfonso, Ramon C. Nolasco, Melecio J. Yap Jr. and Milagrosa “Mila” T. Tan for House Bills No. 3457, 3458 and 3459;

Rep. Ruwel Peter S. Gonzaga for House Bills No. 1871, 2396 and 2514; and

Rep. Jose Antonio “Kuya Jonathan” R. Sy-Alvarado for House Bills No. 3306, 3579, 3585, 3688 and 3781.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Floor Leader, what are you eating?

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). What is that?

REP. NOGRALES (J.). We would like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Luis Raymund F. Villafuerte Jr. of the Second District of Camarines Sur. The guests are: Mr. Raul Delfin Divinagracia, John Apollo Manaog, Adam Malate, Joel Bolaños, Narcel Lopez and Efren Amesola.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Your presence is duly noted. Welcome to the House of Representatives. Dios marhay na hapon sa indo gabos sa pagbisita nindo digdi sa Camara Baja.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, with leave of the House, I move that we open the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). There is a motion to open the Privilege Hour.

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

The Chair declares a saliva festival.

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Gentleman from Party-List KABAYAN, the Hon. H. Harry L. Roque Jr., be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). The fighting Harry Roque is recognized. Please proceed.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROQUE (H.). Mr. Speaker, before I deliver my privilege speech, can I have a two-minute suspension?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Two minutes suspension.

It was 4:09 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:11 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). After a quick change of wardrobe, we now resume.

Congressman Roque, please proceed.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ROQUE (H.)

REP. ROQUE (H.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Two years ago today, Jennifer Laude, a resident of Olongapo, a transgender, met an American serviceman, Mr. Joseph Scott Pemberton, in a bar in Olongapo. There were then different versions of why Jennifer Laude, after about 30 minutes of having met Joseph Scott Pemberton, went with the latter to a nearby motel.

The family of Jennifer, as attested to by her friend who was present when Jennifer met Joseph Scott Pemberton, said on record that it was a mutual decision to check in a nearby motel. Joseph Scott Pemberton, on the other hand, while on the stand, stated that it was in exchange for variable consideration. Nonetheless, what is undisputed is that Jennifer Laude, two years ago today, went with Joseph Scott Pemberton, checked into a motel in Olongapo City and after about 30 minutes, Mr. Pemberton hurriedly left the premises of the motel. We were to find out later on that Joseph Scott Pemberton and Jennifer Laude engaged in a sexual act. Not long after initiating the sexual act, Mr. Joseph Scott Pemberton “felt an organ that was not supposed to be there,” which led him to lose his temper. He was enraged. And because he was enraged, he strangled Jennifer Laude until she was unconscious. This was pursuant to the very testimony given by Joseph Scott Pemberton. Not satisfied with rendering Jennifer Laude unconscious, he dragged the unconscious body of Jennifer into the bathroom.

The Regional Trial Court of Olongapo City then ruled, as a matter of fact, that Joseph Scott Pemberton while enraged dunked the head of the unconscious Jennifer Laude that led to her death. Forensic examination would later on indicate that Jennifer Laude died because of asphyxiation.

The murder of Jennifer Laude reopened controversies about the Visiting Forces Agreement. Previously, the

debate about the Visiting Forces Agreement was only whether or not it was a valid treaty given that under the Philippine Constitution, the other contracting party, the United States, must recognize the Visiting Forces Agreement as a treaty. Opponents of the treaty argued that this provision was not complied with because only the Philippine Senate ratified the VFA and that the U.S. Senate did not.

When the issue reached the Philippine Supreme Court, Mr. Speaker, the ruling of the Philippine Supreme Court was that it was not concerned with the exact procedure by which, under American law, an international agreement would become a treaty. The Philippine Supreme Court was satisfied with the manifestation of the U.S. Ambassador then, that the United States recognized that the Visiting Forces Agreement was a binding international executive agreement.

What is the brouhaha about whether or not the Visiting Forces Agreement was a treaty or an executive agreement? Well, the brouhaha, Mr. Speaker, is, because as a treaty, it will be considered a domestic law of both the Philippine government and the U.S. government. The relevant portion of the Visiting Force Agreement is a provision which states that all non-service-related offenses or crimes committed by U.S. servicemen, while in the Philippines because of the Visiting Forces Agreement, will be under the jurisdiction of Philippine authorities. Had this been a binding treaty even under U.S. law, that would have meant that immediately after the murder of Jennifer Laude, U.S. authorities should have surrendered the person of Joseph Scott Pemberton to Philippine authorities for investigation. But this, Mr. Speaker, was not done.

I was in Olongapo immediately after the incident. We demanded that Philippine authorities should have custody and jurisdiction over the person of Joseph Scott Pemberton. Why? Well, because as part of ordinary police investigation, we needed to find physical evidence in the body of Joseph Scott Pemberton. For instance, we needed to know if his fingernails would have the DNA of the deceased Jennifer Laude. We needed to conduct a medical investigation to determine if, in his body, there were signs that Jennifer Laude put up a struggle as she was being strangled by Mr. Joseph Scott Pemberton. We never had such opportunity, Mr. Speaker. The family did not have this opportunity. The Philippine National Police did not have this opportunity either, although, later on, we understood in the course of the trial that American authorities did conduct these forms of needed investigation. But the question to be asked in the first place, Mr. Speaker, is: Why was it that American authorities refused to surrender jurisdiction over Joseph Scott Pemberton when it was clearly provided in the VFA that the Philippines shall

have jurisdiction over non-service-related offenses committed by U.S. troops in the Philippines?

The homicide or murder of Jennifer Laude highlights what we, those who object to the Visiting Forces Agreement and the EDCA, have been arguing all along—the VFA and the EDCA are not pursuant to the Philippine national interest, if only because we have limited our exercise of jurisdiction, including criminal jurisdiction, as part of our national sovereignty.

While it is true that the Supreme Court has recognized, in the case of *Tañada vs. Angara*, that sometimes the decision to be a party to a treaty entails surrendering aspects of Philippine jurisdiction and sovereignty, in the case of the Visiting Forces Agreement, it is very clear that we did not surrender this jurisdiction. But, despite the fact of non-surrender, U.S. authorities refused to recognize our jurisdiction over Joseph Scott Pemberton immediately after the commission of his crime.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, Joseph Scott Pemberton was found guilty not of murder but of homicide. Until today, and deprived of the right to appeal this decision, I am baffled at why the court found Mr. Scott Pemberton guilty only of the crime of homicide. The court said there was no evidence of abuse of superior strength. The records will belie this conclusion. Joseph Scott Pemberton is a trained Marine. In fact, he was trained how to strangle a person to become unconscious. Not only that, as a member of the Marines, he was given a rigorous physical training prior to his admission and is required to conduct regular physical exercises to continue to become part of the U.S. Marines.

The court did not find cruelty, Mr. Speaker. The same court that did not find cruelty and concluded that after Jennifer Laude was rendered unconscious, because she was strangled by Joseph Scott Pemberton, her head was dunked at the toilet bowl. The toilet bowl is not normally where you place the head of a human being. The fact that you dunked the head of a human being in a toilet bowl is cruelty. If that is not cruelty, I do not know what cruelty is, highlighted by the fact, Mr. Speaker, that there was hardly any need to dunk the head of Jennifer Laude into the toilet bowl given that at that point, she was already unconscious.

It is ironic that only Joseph Scott Pemberton has the opportunity to appeal. But, nonetheless, there are other disturbing conclusions made by the court. For instance, despite having found Pemberton guilty of homicide, he was only sentenced to imprisonment from 6 to 10 years. Given the fact that he was detained for a year during the trial, effectively, that would mean that he would only be imprisoned for 5 to 10 more years. It is equivalent to a slap in the wrist, given that Jennifer Laude was not just—killed, she bore no less than 40 marks of physical abuse before

she was rendered unconscious and before her head was dunked in the toiled bowl. Surely, he deserves at least the penalty of life imprisonment.

Equally intriguing is the reason the court imposed only the penalty of 6 years up to 10 years. According to the court, the fact that Joseph Scott Pemberton was surprised to find an organ that was not supposed to be there was enough reason for him to lose control over his temper, and the court recognized this to be a mitigating circumstance.

How do I feel about this conclusion? Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a very dangerous conclusion, especially for the LGBT. It basically tells bigoted individuals against members of the LGBT, that they have the right to act violently when they find that a person, apparently, is a member of the LGBT community and they can, hence, cite the case of Joseph Scott Pemberton as a precedent that the anger arising from discovering that a person is a member of the LGBT community may be taken as a mitigating circumstance. Likewise, Mr. Speaker, the very light penalty imposed on him was because of the mitigating circumstance of intoxication. Mr. Speaker, a person was killed brutally, and yet, he was not given the full penalty provided by law because they considered his state of drunkenness as a mitigating circumstance. What message are we sending therefore to bigoted individuals who will turn to alcohol in order to be drunk when they commit crimes? They will not be meted the full penalty provided by law because their intoxication and their bigotry will be considered as mitigating circumstances.

I have said it once, and I am saying it again, the death of Jennifer Laude was not just a loss to the Laude family. Her death was a personification of the death of Philippine sovereignty. Moreover, her death was also a death for the aspirations of members of the LGBT community to be recognized as equals, to be treated with respect despite their sexual preference.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, Jennifer Laude might just be the last victim of the VFA and the EDCA. While the President himself has said that he is not ready to abrogate the Visiting Forces Agreement and the EDCA, he has, nonetheless, said that this year's military exercise involving the Philippine and the U.S. Marines may well be the last military exercise. Of course, putting an end to this military exercise will ensure that there will be no more Jennifer Laudes, that there will be no more Nicoles in the future. In the first place, Nicole and Jennifer Laude would not have been victims of U.S. servicemen if not because of the VFA which enabled the presence of these U.S. servicemen in Philippine territory. And while the President has not yet said that he is ready to abrogate the VFA and the EDCA, the question is, why should he not?

The VFA provides that the Philippines and the U.S., pursuant to their treaty undertaking under the Mutual

Defense Treaty to always be in a state of preparedness, must conduct regular military exercises. But who benefits from these military exercises, Mr. Speaker?

To begin with, is it not a fact that it is Filipino soldiers who have been engaged in an armed conflict already described as the longest insurgency in the whole world? If battle experience is what is important in a military exercise, Mr. Speaker, it is the Americans that will benefit from the joint military exercises; they will benefit from the war, from the battle experience of Philippine soldiers.

They also say that the VFA is important because we need to modernize our Armed Forces. My question, Mr. Speaker, is that the Visiting Forces Agreement has been around for almost 20 years, and I did not see the Armed Forces of the Philippines modernized despite the lapse of this 20-year period. But, Mr. Speaker, if I find no further relevance in the VFA, I find the EDCA completely worrisome. To begin with, the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement that was entered into by a mere Executive agreement, and was not even concurred in by the Senate does not contemplate ordinary war games. It actually contemplates the stationing of U.S. troops and facilities in Philippine military bases, subject to the full control of American authorities.

In other words, it goes beyond the holding of military exercises. It forms part of a brand new U.S. policy, the so-called Pivot to Asia, where the United States has decided that at least 90 percent of its overseas military presence will now be in Asia.

Yes, in a sense, the EDCA is a bases agreement. In fact, if you compare the words used in EDCA, you will find that these were the exact same words used in the now-defunct U.S.-Philippines Bases Agreement which the Salonga Senate refused to renew. The only difference is that unlike the U.S.-Philippines Military Bases Agreement which had a fixed term, this EDCA is renewed from year-to-year until eternity, possibly.

What are the dangers of the EDCA? We have seen very clearly, Mr. Speaker, that there is a difference between the Philippine national interest and the American national interest. Even in the West Philippine Sea controversy, the United States has made its position very clear. We do not take sides in the ongoing territorial dispute. The American concern is only freedom of navigation in the West Philippine Sea. In other words, even if the Chinese were to occupy all the islands that are currently under the occupation of the Philippines, the Americans could not care less, provided that China will not consider the West Philippine Sea as part of its national territory.

Secondly, it is very clear, too, that the American interest is at odds with Chinese interest for reasons other than the West Philippine Sea. Perhaps, the greatest danger of the EDCA, Mr. Speaker, is given this

divergence of national interest between the Philippines and the United States, and given the worsening posturing between the United States and China, the EDCA, in case of a full-blown armed conflict between the United States and China, will make the Philippines yet their battleground. Mabuti po sana kung ang paggamit ng dahas ay dahil poprotektahan tayo ng mga Amerikano kapag nilusob ng Tsina ang ating mga isla. Pero hindi nga po ito mangyayari dahil paulit-ulit pong sinasabi ng bansang Amerika na wala silang pakialam sa pag-aagawan ng teritoryo sa Philippine Sea. It is for this reason, Mr. Speaker, that despite the Mutual Defense Treaty, the Americans did not lift a finger when China took away Mischief Reef and, recently, Scarborough Shoal from our possession.

Mr. Speaker, it is for this reason that I am hoping that President Duterte will walk his talk about an independent foreign policy. It is true that in this very august Chamber of Congress, I have taken this podium to denounce extralegal killings happening under the administration of President Duterte, but let it be very clear now that as far as the President's independent foreign policy is concerned, I can only support him in this regard. He is the first President in my mind that has advocated this independent foreign policy, and although we may object to his language, the reality is that his pronouncements indicate that he is trying a new approach, and that is, closer ties with the People's Republic of China to resolve the very thorny issue of fishing in the Scarborough Shoal.

If you will remember, Mr. Speaker, we have no choice but to engage with China precisely because the decision of the Arbitral Tribunal is, both Philippine and Chinese fishermen have established and recognized fishing rights in the Scarborough Shoal. How do you convince China to allow Philippine fishermen to fish in the Scarborough Shoal if you do not develop friendly relations with China?

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the President should be more careful with his language. Perhaps, the President should also make it clear that, in the pursuit of this independent national foreign policy, we do not need to make enemies out of our old allies. But let me go back to Jennifer Laude. We celebrate the second anniversary of Jennifer's homicide, thankful that there is now a change in our foreign policy. Mr. Speaker, if I were to itemize our travails as we investigated and prosecuted the case against Joseph Scott Pemberton, I will require two days by way of my privilege speech.

It was very clear, Mr. Speaker, from the very onset that even public officials were involved in the Jennifer Laude case, not to accord justice to the family or to the Filipino people, but to please the Americans for whatever reasons they may have. I am happy to note that two years after her murder, perhaps her death was not for naught.

I am hoping that the Filipinos have learned that only the Filipinos can promote the national interest. I am hoping that because of the painful experience of Jennifer Laude, more Filipinos will zealously guard Philippine sovereignty and Philippine jurisdiction.

Wherever Jennifer may be today, I am also pleased that her death, at least, started a public discussion on the right to privacy by members of the LGBT. I am pleased to recall that Jennifer's gender did not become an issue as far as the Filipino public was concerned. What they were concerned with was the murder of their fellow Filipino. They were not concerned that she was a transgender. It is for these reasons, Mr. Speaker, that I submit that Jennifer did not die for naught.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good evening.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you, Honorable Roque.

Just to lend clarity to your privilege speech, may we just have a confirmation if, indeed, the Honorable Roque served as counsel for the family of Jennifer Laude.

REP. ROQUE (H.). Yes, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Article XI, Section 17 of the Constitution, I stood as private prosecutor in the murder case of Joseph Scott Pemberton.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you very much.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Harry Roque to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). There is a motion to refer the speech.

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

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the following barangay officials: Punong Barangay Reynaldo Taneo, Punong Barangay Fernando Murcia, Barangay Kagawad Reynante Tabang, Barangay Kagawad Jonas Salazar, Barangay Kagawad Proceso Roy Oniot, Barangay Kagawad Arleen Naraga, Barangay Kagawad Gina Belloc, Barangay Treasurer Annie Tunga, Barangay Secretary Klen Jeric Maquiling, Barangay Kagawad Marcela Ocaña and Barangay Secretary Roy Bautista, guests of the Hon. Gil "Kabarangay" P. Acosta of the Third District of Palawan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Your presence is duly noted. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

Ipagdasal ho natin na pirmahan na ho iyong pagka-postpone noong ating election for barangay dahil alam kong lahat ho kayo ngayong bisita nating barangay officials ay bitin na bitin na ho kung talagang matutuloy ba o hindi.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the following members and officers of the Sangguniang Bayan ng Basud, Camarines Norte: Councilor Marilyn Flores, Councilor Norma Zamudio, Councilor Edgardo Morales, Councilor Briccio Bugagao Jr., Councilor Rosalie Lopez and Mrs. Manuelita Guillermo, guests of the Hon. Marisol C. Panotes of the Second District of Camarines Norte. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). The aforementioned officials' presence is noted. Magandang hapon ho. Kayo ho iyong bayang katabi ho ng distrito ko.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Gentleman from the Third District of Negros Oriental, the Hon. Arnolfo "Arnie" A. Teves Jr., be recognized to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). The Hon. Arnolfo Teves Jr., probably the best among the Teveses, of the Third District of Negros Oriental is hereby recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. TEVES

REP. TEVES. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, everybody.

I stand here again today to ask my colleagues and the citizenry of the Philippines if they are happy with the cellular service that they are receiving.

Sigurado ako na wala sa atin ang masaya sa serbisyo ng telepono na natatanggap natin, even the Internet. But I will not dwell much on the Internet dahil may Bill na naka-file sa mga iyan.

Ang tingin ko dito, before that, halos araw-araw na lang ang dropped calls. Sa Smart na cellphone ko, iyong first two numbers na na-dial ko, parating call failed. Ang tanong: iyong dropped calls ba at calls failed, may bayad na ba ang mga iyon? Kung may bayad ang mga iyon, lusing-lugi tayong lahat, lalo na iyong mahihirap nating mga kapatid. Also, I would like to ask, kumusta iyong mga buwis na binabayaran nila with regard to dropped calls, failed calls, late messages, at iyong mga load na nananakaw? Marami akong naririnig na nag-load ng P200, isang tawag pa lang, ubos

na iyong load nila. Wala naman yatang tawag sa Pilipinas na umaabot ng P200 isang tawag.

Anyway, ang tingin ko dito, para itong traffic e. Ang daming subscribers, ang konti ng linya na dinadaan. Bale, kulang iyong infrastructure sa number of subscribers. Sa laki ng kinikita ng mga Telcos, sa tingin ko hindi na nila ibinabalik sa kung saan nila dapat ibalik, which is the cellular infrastructure which they ought to improve parallel to the number of subscribers that they are accepting.

Madalas nanonood ako ng show ni Ted Failon sa DZMM. Parating kapag may ini-interview siya, napuputol iyong tawag nila sa resource person. Pati si Ted Failon, nagreklamo. Pati Presidente natin, nagreklamo na sa poor quality service of these Telcos.

One time, noong nandito iyong DICT, sinabi nila na ang galing ng cellular service sa Vietnam dahil pinapatakbo ng gobyerno. In fact, during that hearing or briefing, Cong. Harry L. Roque Jr. suggested na wálain na lang iyong private providers. Sabi ko, "Andiyan na sila, i-retain na lang natin. Bakit hindi natin gawing third player ang ating gobyerno?"

When I said that, nagulat ako na iyong Secretary natin sa DICT, agad-agad niyang sinabi "Hindi puwede iyan dahil malulugi daw iyong gobyerno." I do not see the point, Mr. Speaker. Kumita iyong dalawang private players, walang rason na hindi kikita ang pangatlong player. We have 100 million subscribers.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, sa tingin ko mas magandang gawan ito ng congressional inquiry in aid of legislation para masagot ang mga tanong ng publiko kung bakit ganoon at magawan natin ng paraan na baka mapapapayag natin ang ating gobyerno, ang magtayo ng pangatlong player to build competition and to improve cellular service para sa mahihirap nating mga kababayan. Kawawa naman, mahirap na nga, ninanakawan pa sila ng load.

Again, tingnan natin ito nang mabuti at sa tingin ko magiging masaya ang ating mga kapatid sa buong bansa kung magawan natin ng paraan dito sa Kongreso na maimbestigahan at malagyan ng third player to improve cellular and Internet service.

That is all, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. BELARO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Winston "Winnie" Castelo of the Second District of Quezon City for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Representative Castelo is recognized.

REP. CASTELO. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Would the distinguished Representative from Negros allow himself to be interpellated by this Representation, Mr. Speaker?

REP. TEVES. By all means, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTELO. Thank you very much, Mr. privileged Speaker.

In behalf of the millions of telecom users that are now suffering from the low performance that these telecoms have been doing in the country right now, may I know, Mr. Speaker, the legislative remedy that you have in mind to give justice to the millions of consumers now suffering from slow Internet and poor telecom services that the country is now experiencing.

REP. TEVES. I think it would be best to file a resolution, to call them for an investigation in aid of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTELO. Is the privileged Speaker, Mr. Speaker, ready with all the data that he has gathered to support these very serious allegations?

REP. TEVES. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTELO. Would the privileged Speaker, Mr. Speaker, know offhand the rationale or the reason for the slow Internet and the poor telecoms industry that we are experiencing right now?

REP. TEVES. Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons is oversubscription and under par cellular infrastructure.

REP. CASTELO. In the papers that I have read, you have mentioned the lack of cellular sites, and according to the telecom companies, it would be premised on the approval of the LGUs. Would you believe that, Mr. Speaker?

REP. TEVES. Sa tingin ko, simple lang iyan e. Kung ayaw, maraming dahilan; kung gusto, maraming paraan.

REP. CASTELO. Would you know the capital expenditures that these telecoms have rolled out as to the numbers that they have already prepared in the hope that the telecoms will be improving?

REP. TEVES. I am not sure of the numbers, Mr. Speaker, but sigurado ako na kayang-kayang nilang mag-improve ng cellular infrastructure dahil sigurado ako na malaki iyong kinikita nila dahil sa ang alam ko, ang dami na nga ng kita nila na nailagay na nila sa ibang negosyo. In addition to that, sa tingin ko, kahit iyong gobyerno pa natin ang magpatayo ng pangatlong service

provider, I am sure na kikita din iyong pangatlong service provider, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTELO. Is the privileged Speaker, Mr. Speaker, of the opinion that a third player, not necessarily from the private sector or from the government—I think, that is the direction of the privileged Speaker—would help and assist to improve the telecom industry of our country right now?

REP. TEVES. Surely, Mr. Speaker, it would improve. As always, ang kumpetisyon ay parating nakakaganda ng produkto na inilalabas ng competitors.

REP. CASTELO. Would the privileged Speaker, Mr. Speaker, know the income, the revenue that these two giant telecommunications earned in the last two or three years?

REP. TEVES. Hindi ako sigurado sa numbers, but again, even without having specific numbers, kitang-kita natin na sa laki ng kinikita nila, nakaka-invest pa nga sila sa ibang negosyo other than just their telecom. Nakakapasok sila sa power, mining, mga malls, at kung anu-ano pang ibang negosyo na napasok nila dahil sa kinita nila sa kanilang Telco business.

REP. CASTELO. With that, Mr. privileged Speaker and Mr. Speaker, this Representation would like to congratulate the Representative from Negros, Congressman Teves, for taking up the cudgels for the millions of suffering consumers with respect to the telecoms and I hope that his journey to improve the Internet, as well as the cellphones, would come into fruition sapagkat naghihirap na po ang ating taumbayan. Maraming salamat, Mr. privileged Speaker. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you very much. Before we proceed, may the Chair make a suggestion to the Honorable Teves that instead of filing an inquiry in aid of legislation, um-attend na lang kayo ng hearing sa Franchise Committee dahil iyong prangkisa noong isa sa mga major players ng ating telecoms or cellphone providers is up for renewal. I think that will be the best place for you to get answers.

REP. TEVES. I will do that, Mr. Speaker, but still I would file the resolution dahil maraming committee ito na dapat isama pati sa Metro Manila Development dahil ang dami sa ating subscribers ay galing sa Metro Manila.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you very much.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. BELARO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Edward Vera Perez Maceda from the Fourth District of Manila for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). The Hon. Edward Maceda is recognized.

REP. MACEDA. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make a short manifestation but maybe a few short questions to Congressman Teves, if he will allow.

REP. TEVES. Yes, any time.

REP. MACEDA. Iyon bang cellphone na ginagamit ninyo, Smart ba iyan o Globe?

REP. TEVES. Smart at saka Globe.

REP. MACEDA. Iyong poor reception, bad signal, parehas?

REP. TEVES. Pareho lang silang dalawa e. Sa Smart, madalas call failed, sa Globe madalas dropped calls.

REP. MACEDA. Dropped call sa Globe, at call failed sa Smart.

REP. TEVES. Oo. Sa mga anak ko na naka-Globe, ninanakaw daw iyong load nila.

REP. MACEDA. Mayroon pang ninanakaw ang load?

REP. TEVES. Come again?

REP. MACEDA. Mayroong ninanakaw ang load. Iyong kapag tatawag ka, dapat may sampung piso ka pa, biglang zero na iyong balance mo.

REP. TEVES. Oo, minsan dalawang daan na load, isang tawag lang ubos na.

REP. MACEDA. Well, the reason I am asking the Gentleman is because I would like to give an example of one of my constituents wherein he is using both Smart and Globe. In this one example, before problems of bad service like bad signal, poor reception, dropped calls, at iyong kinakain iyong load, sa isang example na ito, makikita mo iyong apat na problemang lumabas, because one of my constituents, Mr. Speaker, he was working as a driver, and then habang nasa trabaho siya, may nagsabi sa kanya, nag-text sa kanya na nadisgrasya iyong mag-ina niya, parang nabangga. So, hindi naman siya makaalis kaagad doon sa trabaho, so bumili siya

ng load, bumili siya ng P20 na load. So, una, he was trying to call up his wife, hindi niya makontak dahil ang sama ng signal, maraming dead spot. So, lumipas na ang kalahating oras, hindi niya nakontak iyong misis niya. Noong finally nakontak niya at ibang network ang tinatawagan niya, so parang P6.50 yata iyong ibinawas, bente segundos—20-second conversation, hindi na nila maintindihan iyong isa't isa because of poor reception. Iyon ikalawa. So, napilitan siyang patayin iyong phone. So, ang natira na lang doon sa binili niyang bente pesos, P13.50. Ngayon, sabi niyang ganoon, susubok siya uling tumawag dahil mayroon pa siyang P13.50. So, tumawag siya ulit. Noong nakausap na niya iyong misis niya at nalaman na nandroon sa Orthopedic, 20 seconds pa lang, naputol na. So, parang dropped call. So, ang natira na lang sa kanya, siyete pesos. So, siyete pesos, sabi niya puwede pa akong tumawag ng isang beses para malaman ko kung ano ang sitwasyon ng aking mag-ina, para kung sakali kailangan kong pumunta sa ospital, alam ko kung saan sila pupuntahan. Noong sumubok siyang tumawag, Mr. Speaker, ubos na iyong P7 at zero balance na.

So, that is what I am saying, like what Congressman Teves and Congressman Castelo were saying. In that one example, you have bad signal, poor reception, dropped calls and kinakain iyong load. It was the reason why my constituent was not able to attend immediately to his ailing wife and daughter. So, eventually, after four hours pa siya nakarating doon sa Orthopedic. But what I am trying to say is, I commend what Congressman Teves said that although Smart, as a corporation, or Globe, or any of the telcos have to take care of their stockholders, at the end of the day, they have to take care of the stakeholders because they are public utilities imbued with public interest. And who are the stakeholders? The stakeholders are the Filipino people. The Filipino people na gumagamit ng kanilang mga serbisyo.

So, at the end of the day, I was able to talk to some of them in some hearings and they promised, nagbigay po sila ng pangako, they gave us their word that they will better their service. They should, Mr. Speaker, because 25 years ago or 30 years ago, noong binigyan sila ng prangkisa nitong Kongresong ito, ang sabi nila, they would provide state-of-the-art technology and improvement when it comes to telecommunications. Even Justice Tinga who was then a Congressman, said that that was the promise of the Telcos. I do not see anything state-of-the-art in dropped calls, there is nothing state-of-the-art in bad reception, there is nothing state-of-the-art in poor signal, and there is nothing state-of-the-art kapag kinakain ang iyong load.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Telcos who have promised to better their service—at the end of the day, to serve the stakeholders not only the stockholders,

but also to serve the Filipino people, the millions and millions of Filipinos who are using them, because sa ngayon po, Mr. Speaker, it is part and parcel of the daily life.

Iyon palang sinasabi ko sa inyong constituent na driver, every week kapag nag-uusap sila ng kaniyang pamilya sa hapag-kainan, mag-a-allot sila ng pera para pambili ng mantika, pambili ng mga groceries, nag-a-allot na rin sila ng pera para sa load, kasi it has become part and parcel of their daily lives.

Kahit po doon sa imbestigasyon sa New Bilibid Prison, sinabi doon na kung walang cellphone, walang drug trade. So, it has become part and parcel of their daily lives.

It is incumbent upon the telcos to make sure that they provide better state-of-the-art service to the Filipino people so that we will not be prejudiced in our day-to-day existence.

I commend Congressman Teves. Thank you.

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

REP. BELARO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Enrico A. Pineda of 1-PACMAN Party-List for his interpellation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). The Honorable Pineda is recognized.

REP. PINEDA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to ask the honorable Gentleman from the Third District of Negros if he is willing to be interpellated.

REP. TEVES. Yes, surely, Mr. Speaker.

REP. PINEDA. Mr. Speaker, the normal—or the reasoning right now of the telcos is it is very difficult for them to put up cell sites because of the bureaucratic red tape of the government because it requires 25 permits just so that they can install a cell site.

My question to the privileged Speaker is, do you think this is a valid excuse or are they just throwing back the problem to the government so that they will not be forced to make improvements or add cell sites to date?

REP. TEVES. As I have said earlier, Mr. Speaker, kung ayaw, maraming dahilan, kung gusto, ay maraming paraan.

REP. PINEDA. Do you not think it is best that we ask the two telcos how many applications for new cell sites that are pending, and if there is a need for

us to speed up the issuance of permits so we can help them bring these cell sites into service, improve the interconnectivity and prevent all these dropped calls and truncated text messages?

REP. TEVES. Not only that, Mr. Speaker. In addition to that, kailangang itanong din natin sa kanila kung gaano na kadami ang subscribers nila at ilan lang ang kaya ng system nila. Kaya kailangang ipatawag natin sila dito for an investigation in aid of legislation para masagot iyong mga katanungan ng mga kababayan natin.

REP. PINEDA. Mr. Speaker, if I may ask the Gentleman from Negros Oriental, what you are saying is that masyadong marami nang subscribers, but they have not made any effort to improve the facilities which they have or are existing right now?

REP. TEVES. Exactly, Mr. Speaker. Sa tingin ko, it is an oversubscription problem and underspending for their cellular infrastructures.

In addition to that, kailangan din pong ipatawag sila sa Ways and Means Committee dahil hindi ko na alam kung tama ang buwis na binabayaran nila, especially sa messages na hindi dumarating na nabayaran, sa dropped calls at failed calls na nababayaran din ng subscriber.

REP. PINEDA. That will be all, Mr. Speaker. We would also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Gentleman from the Third District of Negros Oriental for taking the fight of the consumers against these two Telcos for their bad services.

That is all, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TEVES. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. BELARO. Mr. Speaker, the next Member of the House to avail of the Privilege Hour is the Lady from Bagong Henerasyon Party-List, the Hon. Bernadette “BH” Herrera-Dy.

Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, the Lady would be interpellating.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). So it is for interpellation.

Congresswoman Herrera-Dy is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Gentleman from Negros yield to few questions?

REP. TEVES. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Unang-una, gusto kong magpasalamat sa ating kasama for bringing this up dahil talagang isa ito sa mga bumabagabag sa atin. Naniniwala ka ba because na-discuss mo ang tungkol sa dropped calls kanina, it is high time na magpasá tayo ng isang batas na per-pulse billing na imbes na per minute, dapat per six seconds, para masiguro na kahit nagda-dropped calls, hindi tayo kaagad macha-charge.

REP. TEVES. That will be a remedy and it may be a solution, pero para sa akin, mas importante talaga na maimbistigahan at matingnan natin na ang viability, which I am sure, it is very viable that we put up a third player and make it the government, if possible.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Ano po ang opinyon ninyo noong tayo ay nagmi-meeting, binanggit ni DICT Secretary na dalawa lang ang choices natin regarding sa pagbili ng Globe and Smart from San Miguel? It is either we investigate it or ipagamit para lumawak ang signal sa buong bansa. Ano po sa tingin ninyo ang dapat gawin ng DICT or ang mas tamang gawin, gamitin ito o imbestigahan muna ang pagiging legal ng transaction na ito?

REP. TEVES. Mr. Speaker, other than the transaction, in that meeting, nagulat ako kung bakit kaagad-agad sarado na ang utak ng ating DICT Secretary sa proposal ko na magbukas ng pangatlong player. To this Representation, feeling ko lang, parang nagdedepensa siya para sa dalawang player. Sorry to say, but that is how I really felt, that the Secretary wanted the two players to stay and would not want to have a third player.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Siguro, isa ito sa maaaring tingnan natin at maging topic din sana ng imbestigasyon na mayroon tayo, dahil ang isa pang gusto kong idagdag doon, dahil wala tayong sarili nating gateway, nakadepende lang tayo sa idinideklara ng ating dalawang kumpanya, kaya ang mga buwis na binabayaran nila, hindi natin alam kung tama o mali dahil nga wala tayong national systems gateway. Sa tingin ninyo, importante ba ito dahil kung natatandaan natin, nagtanong ako kung sulit ba ang investment na magkaroon tayo ng sarili nating national systems gateway doon sa ibabayad na buwis kapag nabilang natin ito? Ang isinagot nila ay “oo.” Kasama ka ba namin—kasama ba natin ang Gentleman from Negros para suportahan ang bagay na ito?

REP. TEVES. I am not very familiar with this gateway, Mr. Speaker.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Ito po ay para nata-track

natin lahat ng calls na lumalabas-pasok sa atin dahil sa ngayon, hindi natin alam ang mga ibinabayad na buwis, especially when it comes to the foreign calls. Isa itong sistema na sinabi nga ng Secretary ng DICT na kung nabili natin ay sulit naman dahil mas malaki ang makokolekta nating buwis dito.

REP. TEVES. If that would help our countrymen, I will support it. But I would really like to reiterate na dapat talagang magkaroon ng competition dahil kung mino-monopolize lang tayo ng dalawang players, na sa tingin ko pa ay pinoprotektahan ng ating DICT Secretary, kawawa ang mga kapatid, kababayan nating Pilipino.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, ako po ay nagpapasalamat sa ating kasama, the Gentleman from Negros. Rest assured, he has our support because this is also one of the advocacies of Bagong Henerasyon Party-List.

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you very much.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from Party-List KABAYAN, the Hon. Ron P. Salo, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). The Gentleman from the Party-List KABAYAN is recognized. He may proceed.

REP. SALO. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

This is not exactly an interpellation but just a manifestation, Mr. Speaker, inasmuch as I also wish to express our firm support and appreciation to the Gentleman from Negros for taking the cudgels for millions and millions of subscribers like me who are really experiencing such a bad signal and bad service from the two telecommunication companies. I really support his advocacy to ensure that there will be greater competition in the telecom field.

That is all, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

REP. TEVES. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech and the interpellations of the Hon. Arnolfo A. Teves Jr. to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). There is a motion to refer the speech to the Committee on Rules.

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

REP. TEVES. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of our guests in the gallery, to wit: Boonlert Tichaya from Thailand; Stephanie Niemer and Lindsay Stalzer from the United States of America; Yuri Fukuda from Japan; Alyja Daphnie Santiago, Mika Aereen Reyes, Frances Xinia Molina, Jovelyn Gonzaga, Kim Fajardo, Jennylyn Reyes and Rachel Anne Daquis, all from the Philippines; Ekaterina Krivets from Russia; Lynda Windy Morales from Puerto Rico; and Yevgeniya Nyukhalova from Ukraine. They are all players of the Philippine Super Liga F2 Logistics Manila. With them are their coaching staff: Mr. Moro Branizlav of Serbia; Mr. Shun Takahashi of Japan; Mr. Emilio Reyes Jr. of the Philippines; Mr. Benson Boboc of the Philippines; Mr. George Pascua of the Philippines; Ms. Cristina Salak of the Philippines; Mr. Ian Fernandez of the Philippines; Ms. Pau Tomas of the Philippines; Dr. Raul Alcantara of the Philippines; Mr. Kris Dimaculangan; Ms. Vilet Ponce-De Leon; and Mr. Efren Uy. They are all the guests of the Hon. Michael L. Romero, Ph.D. from 1-PACMAN Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Your presence is duly noted. (*Applause*) Welcome to the House of Representatives. May the Chair add that his favorite player is Mika Reyes. Animo La Salle!

Thank you very much and I understand that your sponsor, Cong. Mikee Romero, will treat you to an eat-all-you-can, at the Nobu Restaurant in City of Dreams.

Thank you very much, Cong. Mikee Romero.
The Floor Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move for a suspension of the session.

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

It was 5:08 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:24 p.m., the session was resumed with Speaker Pantaleon D. Alvarez presiding.

THE SPEAKER. The session is resumed.

REP. FARIÑAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the Privilege Hour.

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

REP. FARIÑAS. Mr. Speaker, on October 11, 2016, the House adopted House Resolution No. 466 as Resolution No. 15, commending and conferring the Golden Mace Award to His Excellency Philip S. Goldberg, Ambassador of the United States of America to the Philippines, for his efforts in further enriching the ties between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, we are privileged to have with us here today His Excellency Philip S. Goldberg. May I request that he be invited to the rostrum to receive a copy of Resolution No. 15.

THE SPEAKER. We welcome and invite His Excellency Philip Goldberg to proceed to the rostrum. (*Applause*)

At this juncture, U.S. Ambassador Philip Goldberg ascended the rostrum to receive the copy of Resolution No. 15.

REP. FARIÑAS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Secretary General be directed to read the title and the text of Resolution No. 15, while the same is being presented to Ambassador Philip S. Goldberg.

THE SPEAKER. The Secretary General is directed to read the title and the text of Resolution No. 15.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Resolution No. 15, entitled: RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONFERRING THE GOLDEN MACE AWARD TO HIS EXCELLENCY PHILIP S. GOLDBERG, AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PHILIPPINES, FOR HIS EFFORTS IN FURTHER ENRICHING THE TIES BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

WHEREAS, Ambassador Philip S. Goldberg, with extensive experience as career minister in the United States Senior Foreign Service, was sworn in as the Ambassador to the Philippines on November 21, 2013;

WHEREAS, upon his arrival in Manila, he rushed immediately to Tacloban and Palo, Leyte which were heavily hit by Typhoon Yolanda to help deal with the impact of Typhoon Yolanda which was the reason that his confirmation was expedited by the United States Senate;

WHEREAS, his diplomatic mission to the Philippines focused on bilateral cooperation particularly on humanitarian assistance and security matters;

WHEREAS, under his ambassadorship to the Philippines, the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) between the Philippines and the United States of America was signed and it provided for enhanced humanitarian assistance and disaster response capabilities, aside from the military modernization which our country needs;

WHEREAS, his efforts and contributions to the Philippines, especially the humanitarian assistance, which further enhanced the ties and friendship of the Philippines and the United States of America deserve our commendation: Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, To commend and confer the Golden Mace Award to His Excellency Philip S. Goldberg, Ambassador of the United States of America to the Philippines, for his efforts in further enriching the ties between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America.

Adopted October 11, 2016. (*Applause*)

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, in order to allow our Members to meet and extend their greetings to our distinguished guest, I move that we suspend our session for a few minutes.

THE SPEAKER. The session is suspended.

It was 5:28 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:43 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Rolando G. Andaya Jr. presiding.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

ROLL CALL

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we call the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). 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 results is as follows, per Journal No. 36, dated October 12, 2016:

PRESENT:

Abaya	Celeste
Abayon	Cerilles
Abu	Chavez
Abueg	Chipeco
Acharon	Co
Acop	Cojuangco
Acosta	Cortes
Adiong	Cosalan
Advincula	Crisologo
Aggabao	Cua
Alejano	Cuaresma
Almonte	Cueva
Alonte-Naguiat	Dalipe
Alvarez (F.)	Dalog
Alvarez (P.)	De Jesus
Amatong	De Venecia
Andaya	De Vera
Angara-Castillo	Del Mar
Antonino	Del Rosario
Antonio	Deloso-Montalla
Aragones	Dimaporo (A.)
Arbison	Dimaporo (M.K.)
Arcillas	Dy
Arenas	Elago
Atienza	Enverga
Bag-ao	Erice
Bagatsing	Ermita-Buhain
Baguilat	Escudero
Banal	Espina
Barbers	Espino
Barzaga	Estrella
Batocabe	Eusebio
Bautista-Bandigan	Fariñas
Belaro	Ferrer (J.)
Belmonte (F.)	Ferrer (L.)
Belmonte (J.C.)	Ferriol-Pascual
Benitez	Fortun
Bernos	Fortuno
Bertiz	Fuentebella
Billones	Garcia (G.)
Bolilia	Garcia-Albano
Bondoc	Garin (S.)
Bordado	Gasataya
Bravo (A.)	Geron
Bravo (M.V.)	Go (A.C.)
Brosas	Go (M.)
Bulut-Begtang	Gomez
Cagas	Gonzaga
Calixto-Rubiano	Gonzales (A.P.)
Campos	Gonzales (A.D.)
Canama	Gonzalez
Castelo	Gullas
Castro (F.L.)	Hernandez
Castro (F.H.)	Herrera-Dy

Hofer	Ramos
Jalosjos	Relampagos
Javier	Revilla
Kho	Roa-Puno
Labadlabad	Robes
Lacson	Rocamora
Lagman	Rodriguez (I.)
Lanete	Rodriguez (M.)
Laogan	Roman
Lazatin	Romero
Leachon	Romualdez
Lee	Romualdo
Lopez (B.)	Roque (H.)
Lopez (C.)	Roque (R.)
Lopez (M.L.)	Sagarbarria
Macapagal-Arroyo	Salceda
Maceda	Salo
Madrona	Salon
Malapitan	Sambar
Manalo	Sandoval
Mangaoang	Santos-Recto
Mangudadatu (S.)	Sarmiento (E.M.)
Marcoleta	Savellano
Marcos	Siao
Mariño	Singson
Martinez	Suansing (E.)
Matugas	Suansing (H.)
Mellana	Suarez
Mending	Sy-Alvarado
Mercado	Tambunting
Mirasol	Tan (A.)
Montoro	Tejada
Nava	Teves
Nieto	Tiangco
Noel	Ting
Nograles (J.J.)	Tinio
Núñez-Malanyaon	Tugna
Oaminal	Tupas
Olivarez	Ty
Ong (E.)	Umali
Ortega (P.)	Unabia
Ortega (V.N.)	Ungab
Pacquiao	Unico
Paduano	Uy (R.)
Palma	Vargas
Pancho	Vargas-Alfonso
Panganiban	Velarde
Panotes	Velasco
Papandayan	Veloso
Pichay	Vergara
Pimentel	Villafuerte
Pineda	Villanueva
Plaza	Villaraza-Suarez
Primicias-Agabas	Villarica
Quimbo	Villarin
Radaza	Violago

Yap (A.)	Yu
Yap (M.)	Zarate
Yap (V.)	Zubiri

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. The Speaker is present.

The roll call shows that 226 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). The roll reveals that 226 public servants have braved the floods to lend their indispensable service to the country this afternoon. Thank you very much.

With 226 Members present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum. Palakpakan. (*Applause*)

Just for clarity, did you—plus one, Congressman Salceda, hinahanap ho kayo kanina ni Ambassador Goldberg because of your utterances last month.

Just for clarity, were you able to count the presence of Congressman Revilla? How many times did you count him? Because at the start of the calling of the roll, he was wearing a suit. After the roll, he is now wearing a barong. He changed his—I do not know why, baka nabuhusan ng ketchup o pabango.

Floor Leader, let us proceed.

PRIVILEGE HOUR

Continuation

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Again?

REP. NOGRALES (J.). We resume the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). There is a motion to resume the Privilege Hour. Unfortunately, there are no objections. The motion is carried.

Let us proceed with the Privilege Hour.

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we extend the Privilege Hour for another 30 minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Hopefully, the last extension.

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

The Privilege Hour is extended for 30 minutes. Let us proceed.

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Gentleman from the Party-List BAYAN MUNA, Rep. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate, for his privilege speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Kinikilala natin ngayon ang Kinatawan, ang bigotilyong Kinatawan ng BAYAN MUNA, the Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate. Kayo po ay kinikilala. Magsimula na po kayo.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. ZARATE

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat po, G. Ispiker.

G. Ispiker, nitong nakaraang Oktubre 6 hanggang 9, matagumpay na naisagawa ang ikalawang round ng usapang pangkapayapaan sa pagitan ng gobyerno ng Republika ng Pilipinas at ng National Democratic Front of the Philippines sa Oslo, Norway. Buong karangalang naging bahagi ang Kinatawang ito bilang observer ng makasaysayang usapang pangkapayapaang ito. Nagpunta ang inyong lingkod sa Oslo, Norway bilang bahagi ng anim na kataong delegasyon na ipinadala ng liderato ng Kamara de Representantes sa pangunguna ng ating Deputy Speaker Bai Sandra Sinsuat A. Sema at ni Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity Chair, and Tawi-Tawi Representative, Ruby M. Sahali.

Mr. Speaker, pangalawang round na po ito ng peace talks na naganap nitong Oktubre. Nitong nakaraang Agosto 22 hanggang 28, naganap ang unang round ng peace talks sa pagitan ng GRP at NDF doon din sa Oslo, Norway na fina-facilitate ng Royal Norwegian Government. Sayang nga lamang at hindi ito nadaluhan ng delegasyon mula sa ating Kapulungan, itong unang round. G. Ispiker, ang pagpapatuloy ng peace talks ay isa sa mga pangako ni Pangulong Digong Duterte sa mamamayan.

Kung babalikan natin ang kasaysayan, limang administrasyon na ang nakalilipas mula nang umpisahan ang usapang pangkapayapaan sa pagitan ng GRP at NDFP. Noong 1987, nag-umpisa ang peace talks sa ilalim ng administrasyon ni dating Pangulong Corazon Aquino. Sa ulat ng isang online news, mahigit 40 rounds of talks at mahigit na 20 kasunduan na ang napirmahan mula pa po noong 1987. Kabilang na rito ang 1992 Hague Joint Declaration na naglatag ng substantive agenda, at ang pagkasunud-sunod nito, ng mga adyendang ito. Kabilang din dito ang JASIG o ang Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees para sa ligtas na pagdalo ng mga peace consultants mula sa magkabilang panig at kasama rin dito ang Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law or CARHRIHL.

Sa ilalim ng nakaraang administrasyon ni Benigno Aquino III, hindi nito kinilala ang Hague Joint Declaration. Nilabag din ng nakaraang administrasyon ang JASIG sa pag-aresto at pag-criminalize sa mga political offenses ng mga peace consultants. Maraming mga peace consultants ang hinuli sa nakaraang administrasyon. Hindi rin pinagana ang Joint Monitoring Committee or JMC na binubuo ng

magkabilang panig para i-monitor ang implementasyon ng CARHRIHL. Ibig ko pong sabihin, sa madaling sabi, natigil muli ang usapang pangkapayapaan sa nakaraang administrasyon.

Kaya, G. Ispiker, napakalaking bagay ang pahayag ni Pangulong Duterte sa pagiging bukas sa usapang pangkapayapaan bago pa man siya nanumpa bilang Pangulo ng bansa. Unprecedented sa kasaysayan ng peace talks ang naganap sa kasalukuyan na sa isang tinatawag nating pambihirang pagkakataon, hindi pa nakaupo si Presidente Duterte, binuo na niya ang negotiating team para sa preliminary talks na naganap noong June 14 to 15 doon din po sa Oslo, Norway. Mula noon, mabilis na naitakda ang first round ng formal talks sa usapang pangkapayapaan.

Batay ho sa ulat ng GRP at NDF panel nitong Agosto, matagumpay ang first round of peace talks dahil nagkaroon ng pagkakaisa ang magkabilang panig sa pag-affirm sa mga naunang kasunduan sa usaping pangkapayapaan, ang pag-reconstitute sa listahan ng JASIG, ang pag-revitalize ng Joint Monitoring Committee at ang pagpapabilis ng prosesong pangkapayapaan. Sa unang round din ng peace talks, nagbigay ng commitment ang GRP sa pagpapalaya ng mga detenidong pulitikal, lalo na ang mga detenidong maysakit at matatanda. Mayroon ding rekomendasyon kay Pangulong Digong Duterte na maglabas ng amnesty proclamation para sa mga detenidong pulitikal at ang pagkakaroon ng indefinite ceasefire ng magkabilang panig.

Nitong nakaraang linggo, G. Ispiker, signipikante ang mga napag-usapan sa second round of peace talks. Naging tampok ang pagpapalaya sa mga detenidong pulitikal at amnesty proclamation, ang mga pulong ng mga reciprocal working committees, at ang pagsisikap na bumuo ng bilateral ceasefire at naitakda rin ang next round sa January 17 sa isang neutral na lugar.

Ano ang kabuluhan ng peace talks para sa ating mamamayan, G. Ispiker? Ano ang mapapala sa mga kasunduang napirmahan na ng dalawang panig?

Nitong nakaraang round of peace talks, nagkasundo ang magkabilang panig sa tinatawag na framework or balangkas para sa socio-economic reforms. Napagkasunduan rin ang outline or framework para sa political and constitutional reforms. At, ang panghuli, nagkaroon din ng outline para sa end of hostilities and disposition of forces.

Bagama't nagkaroon ng delay, naisaayos ang framework ng socio-economic reforms. Nagpalitan ng draft at nagtakda ng time frame para pag-usapan ang mga specifics na laman ng mga naturang drafts.

Mahalaga, G. Ispiker, ang socio-economic reforms dahil dito pag-uusapan ang mga hakbang na dapat gawin para harapin ang kahirapan na siyang ugat ng halos limang dekadang armadong tunggalian o labanan sa ating bansa. Dito pag-uusapan ang solusyon sa

problema ng ating mga magsasaka, manggagawa ng ating mga urban poor at iba pang mahihirap na sektor ng lipunan. Dito rin sa socio-economic reforms pag-uusapan ang inaasahang outcome para mapabuti ang kalagayan ng ating mga mamamayan lalung-lalo na ang mga mahihirap. Kung magtutuloy-tuloy hanggang sa implementasyon, malaki ang magiging impact o epekto nito sa kabuhayan ng ating mga kababayan. Magiging malaking challenge nga lamang, G. Ispiker, ang inaasahang pagpapalaya sa mga detenidong pulitikal sang-ayon sa CAHRIHL na nauna nang napirmahan noong 1998 at in-affirm nitong dalawang joint statements nitong mga nakaraang buwan.

Umaasa ang magkabilang panig na sa lalong madaling panahon ay mapipirmahan na ni Pang. Digong Duterte ang Executive order para sa isang general amnesty na magiging katanggap-tanggap sa magkabilang panig. Kapag nailabas na ito, papasok na ang ating papel dahil ayon sa ating Saligang Batas, ang isang amnesty proclamation ng Presidente ay nangangailangan ng concurrence ng Congress.

G. Ispiker, sa maikling panahon ng panunungkulan ni Pangulong Digong, bago lang niya nadaanan ang kanyang ika-100 araw sa panunungkulan, malayo na ang iniusad ng ating usaping pangkapayapaan. May mga ilang gusot, totoo, at inaasahan nating sa mga darating na araw, marami pang gusot na kailangang pangibabawan sa paglarga ng usaping pangkapayapaan.

There are a lot of differences na kailangang harapin lalo na kapag pinag-usapan ang laman ng mga substantive agenda gaya ng socio-economic, political and constitutional reforms. Pero, G. Ispiker, nakakahawa ang optimismo ng mga kalahok sa peace talks, magmula man sa gobyerno ng Pilipinas, ang ating peace panel, at maging sa kabilang panig, ang National Democratic Front. Kung makikita ho natin kung gaano kainit ang kanilang pagpapalitan ng mga puntos, at kung gaano naman sila kadalang nagkakasundo, ito po talaga ay nagbibigay sa atin ng optimism.

Naniniwala tayong napakahalaga na committed ang magkabilang panig, ang GRP at ang NDFP, na seryoso at sinserong mag-uusap para sa kapayapaan. Political will, mutual trust, goodwill and understanding—ito po iyong apat na elemento at tayo ay naniniwalang ito ang mga kailangan para mapagkaisa ang dalawang panig, makabuo ng mga kasunduan at maipagpatuloy ang usaping pangkapayapaan sa harap ng mga balakid. Sa ating karanasan, muli nating napatunayang hindi madali ang usaping pangkapayapaan. Tunay nga, G. Ispiker, na wala namang shortcut sa kalinaw, walang shortcut sa peace, at walang shortcut sa kapayapaan.

G. Ispiker, ang aking panawagan sa ngayon sa ating mga kapwa Mambabatas, maging mapanuri sana tayo, maging bukas ang isipan kagaya ng mga miyembro ng negotiating panel on both sides, the GRP and NDFP, at suportahan nating mga Mambabatas ang usaping

pangkapayapaan.

Sa partikular, G. Ispiker, inaanyayahan ko kayong suportahan ang mga panukalang resolusyon at batas ng Representasyong ito sa pagpapatuloy ng peace talks at pagpapalaya ng mga detenidong pulitikal at sa pagkakaroon ng general amnesty.

Usaping pangkapayapaan, kapayapaan, kalinaw, pagbabago—ito ang nais ni Pang. Digong Duterte at ito rin ang nais ng ating mga kababayan. Kaya ito ay mas mahalaga, G. Ispiker, dahil ito ang kapayapaan, ang pananawagan at kahingian ng mamamayang ating pinaglilingkuran.

Maraming salamat po. Maganda at mapayapang hapon po sa ating lahat.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you, Congressman Zarate.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the privilege speech of the Honorable Zarate to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). There is a motion to refer the speech to the Committee on Rules.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Elisa “Olga” T. Kho of the Second District of Masbate to avail of the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). The Hon. Olga Kho is recognized.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF REP. KHO

REP. KHO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my dearest colleagues, and fellow Filipinos.

I rise today to address an issue that concerns not only this Representation, but also other fellow Members of Congress and tens of thousands of Filipinos every day.

Air transportation is a key factor in our country’s international affairs and domestic growth. The Philippines is an archipelagic State and that makes air travel the fastest way to meet other Filipinos, to build business partnerships and to boost the Philippine tourism sector. Our country is strategically located at the center of Southeast Asia, making air travel a vital factor in the so-called ASEAN integration. As Members of the Philippine Congress, air travel serves as the most efficient way of connecting us to our respective far-flung provinces and constituents, to our ASEAN neighbors and to the global business community. Aside from

that, local tourism is mostly driven by the outpour of foreigners interested in traveling to many tourist spots and eventually investing in different industries in our localities. The continuous trade of goods and services, as well as investments brought about by prospective international clients, directly promotes to the overall economy of our nation. As such, air travel is now considered the catalyst for the growth of our provinces, our regions and our country.

As promising as it is, there is recurring problem that hampers air travel. Being a long-time regular passenger myself to our island province of Masbate, I have seen how the number of airline passengers has increased in our province and also to other provinces of the country. This is good because this is a sign of growth and a sign of strong potential for the provincial economies and tourism activities. With this surge in local passengers, the airfares should have gone down but I have observed that the airfares being charged us in Masbate remain very high.

As a Congresswoman of an island province, I need to go home to my constituents on unscheduled dates especially if there are important meetings or occasions. In other words, I cannot schedule my flights. I am surprised that the price of our air travel has not gone down compared to that of other provinces. I spend around P7,000 for one-way air travel to our island province. I know this kind of local air travel high pricing is also being experienced by many of you here and tens of thousands of Filipinos everyday. Why are the local airfares this expensive? It is easier to find a cheaper round-trip ticket to Japan, Singapore or Hong Kong than a one-way travel to my province.

We, in the government, are tirelessly promoting the operational expansions and increased flights to the local tourist spots of our country. With those increased flights to the local tourist spots of our country, with those increased flights and operational expansions, we expect at least a generous price decrease from these airline companies.

Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, I urge that we inquire on the pricing scheme of our local airlines, especially the Philippine Airlines, to make sure that they are not abusing the franchise Congress has granted them for their operation. We are living in times of globalization and acculturation, and a lot of our fellow Filipinos rely mostly on this means of transport to work, travel and develop social ties with our families, friends and business partners across the islands. If they continue to impose increased pricings like these, I am positive that it will discourage millions of Filipinos to become local tourists and this will hamper the collective growth and development of the Philippine islands.

Most of our colleagues here understand the gravity of this lingering situation. After a week's worth of stressful work here in Congress, you use air travel to see your respective constituents in far-flung provinces or

islands. Most of the time, you also bring family members and staff members there to fully grasp and solve the problems there, and sometimes, you are also forced to shoulder the air transportation of your constituents who badly need medical attention here in Manila. We are all faced with these overpriced airfares.

Another issue for tens of thousands of Filipinos is the regular spikes in air travel prices when the date of departure is nearer. Sometimes, the spikes are by the thousands for every day or half-day upon nearing the date of air travel. When the airline has a few remaining vacant seats and suddenly before the flight, we buy those seats and make them fly with a full-cabin, therefore, the airline must be very happy because we made them earn more money by getting their service. If not for these last-minute passengers, they would have flown with the same-flight expenses but with fewer passengers. Therefore, they are fortunate to have last-minute passengers because they contribute to their full success in terms of flight and income. *Bakit nila minamahalan nang todo ang flight eh iyong mga late passengers naman ang papakyaw ng ibinebenta nila?*

The common saying in this modern age is, "The world is getting smaller." This is because more and more humans are able to travel across the world because of cheaper airfares. Here in our country, the common saying is, "The gap between the rich and the poor is getting bigger," meaning, the few rich people are able to make so much money from the bigger poor population of our country by overpricing the services of the industries they own. By the overpricing of one vital industry service, the air travel, these big airlines are not only making our constituents their cash cow, but they are also limiting the chances of personal, social and economic growth for tens of millions of Filipinos. They are limiting the potential of the local tourism industry, and they are disabling the catalyst for the growth of our nation.

If these companies would still not adhere to our collective desire to urge for the lowering of their prices for unreasonable arguments such as airfare technicalities, we should revoke their legislative franchises. This grant of franchise is a privilege and such privilege, when abused solely for selfish gains at the expense of the Filipino people, must be revoked and be given to other blossoming airline companies that need our support for them to fully serve the Filipino people.

Sa inyo pong tulong, Mr. Speaker, fellow Representatives, pababain natin ang presyo ng panghimpapawid na pagbiyahe ng masang Pilipino.

Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Thank you very much, Congresswoman Kho.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we

refer the speech of the Honorable Kho to the Committee on Rules for its appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). There is a motion to refer the speech of the Honorable Kho to the Committee on Rules.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we terminate the Privilege Hour.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). There is a motion to terminate the Privilege Hour.

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

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, in accordance with our Rules Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation, I move that we refer the following resolutions to the appropriate committees.

House Resolution ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Floor Leader, just to satisfy my curiosity, what is the difference between a referral which is read by the Secretary General compared to a referral read by the Floor Leader? Is there any difference? Is there a preference to any, or is it the same?

REP. NOGRALES (J.). It has the same effect, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Why the difference in treatment? Who is that resource person beside you?

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Committee on Rules.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Can you identify yourself? Who is that?

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Committee Secretary, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Looks like a foreigner.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. NOGRALES (J.). One moment, Mr. Speaker. I move to suspend the session, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). The session is suspended for one minute.

It was 6:16 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:16 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

Let us now move to the referral. Nagtatanong lang. Proceed, please.

REFERRAL OF HOUSE RESOLUTIONS ON INQUIRIES IN AID OF LEGISLATION

REP. NOGRALES (J.). Mr. Speaker, we would like to refer the following House resolutions to the appropriate Committees:

1. House Resolution No. 351 – inquiry re: effects of the coal dust from the commercial stockpile on the environment, and on the health and livelihood of the residents of Port Area, Vitas, Tondo, Manila, to the Committee on Ecology;

2. House Resolution No. 392 – inquiry re: implications of the expiration of the special treatment on rice under the agreement on agriculture of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, to the Special Committee on Globalization and WTO;

3. House Resolution No. 396 – inquiry re: implementation of Section 20 of Republic Act No. 8042, otherwise known as the “Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995,” as amended by Republic Act No. 10022, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;

4. House Resolution No. 400 – inquiry re: charges imposed by mobile service providers on mobile Internet use, to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology;

5. House Resolution No. 402 – inquiry re: measures being done by the Department of Health to prevent the possible spread of the Zika virus in the Philippines, to the Committee on Health;

6. House Resolution No. 403 – investigation re: operations of the existing transportation network companies or TNCS (Uber, Grab and U-Hop), to the Committee on Transportation;

7. House Resolution No. 407 – investigation re: alleged anomalous acts and practices being implemented by Dr. Dexter Buted, President of the Pangasinan State University, Lingayen Campus, to the Committee on Higher and Technical Education;

8. House Resolution No. 408 – investigation re: 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, to the Committee on Human Rights;

9. House Resolution No. 409 – investigation re: harassment of Aeta indigenous peoples (IP) by members of the 710th SPOW, Philippine Air Force (PAF) by prohibiting the ingress of construction materials to be used by the Aeta IP for house repairs and the egress of forest and agricultural products bound for the market, to the Committee on Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples; and

10. House Resolution No. 415 – inquiry re: alleged predatory pricing of oil products in Mindanao, to the Committee on Energy.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). There is a motion to refer the aforementioned House resolutions to the appropriate Committees.

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

I asked that question, Mr. Floor Leader, because in this particular sequence, I only get to bang the gavel once. In the first system, for each and every House resolution, I get to bang it. So this time, instead of 10, I have a discount, I only get to bang it once. So, I am wondering if there are any legal implications when I bang the gavel or not.

Okay, let us proceed, Mr. Floor Leader.

REP. BELARO. Mr. Speaker, I was told that the procedure adopted...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Who told you?

REP. BELARO. ... the resource speakers from the Committee on Rules... says that this is in compliance with the procedure observed by the House of Representatives with respect to inquiries in aid of legislation, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). You were told by whom?

REP. BELARO. As verified from the Rules of the House of Representatives with respect to inquiries in aid of legislation, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Okay. Thank you very much for that candid answer.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. BELARO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until October 17, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Andaya). Although I hate to say goodbye, but this seems to be the end. The session is adjourned.

It was 6:19 p.m.