



Congressional Record

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House of Representatives

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Tuesday, March 13, 2018

No. 74

CALL TO ORDER

At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Eric D. Singson called the session to order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The session is called to order.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please rise for the singing of the National Anthem.

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

PRAYER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please remain standing for a minute of silent prayer and meditation.

Everybody remained standing for the silent prayer.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

ROLL CALL

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

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

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is reflected in Journal No. 74, dated March 13, 2018.**

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. The roll call shows that 231 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). With 231 Members present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, considering that copies of the Journal of the previous session have been distributed to the Members, I move that we dispense with the reading of the Journal.

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

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move for the approval of the Journal of the previous session, Journal No. 73.

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

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Jericho Jonas B. Nograles: Bigkis Task Force headed by its officials, Director Felix Cabugnason and President Rolando Cabungason, together with all the other members present.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please rise to be recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to request that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Kaka J. Bag-ao from the Lone District of Dinagat Islands. They are the local government officials from the municipality of Dinagat, province of Dinagat Islands led by Vice Mayor Petnel Sombrado, together with all the Sanggunian Bayan members; the Liga ng

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

mga Barangay President Elvin Patulin; and Secretary to the Sangguniang Bayan Vivian Flores.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please rise to be recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, likewise, may I ask that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the honorable Dep. Minority Leader Jose “Lito” L. Atienza Jr. from BUHAY Party-List: Mga Kababaihan ng Maynila; Kababaihan Laban sa Divorce; Coalition for the Defense of the Filipino Familia; and Servants of Jesus and Mary.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please rise to be recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, may I also ask that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Sabiniano S. Canama and the Hon. Anthony M. Bravo, PhD from the COOP-NATCCO Party-List in today’s session: the cooperative officers from Bislig City and councilors from Tangub City, Misamis Occidental, and the cooperative officers led by Almar Autida and officials of the Tangub City Council, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please rise to be recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Reference of Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). 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 and Resolutions on First Reading, Messages from the Senate, Communications, and Committee Reports, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 7347, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING A TRAFFIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT (TIA) AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SYSTEM FOR EVERY

PROPOSED PROJECT AND UNDERTAKING, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1586”

By Representative Acop

TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LAND USE AND THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 7348, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE TURNOVER OF SEIZED SMUGGLED RICE TO THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY”

By Representative Bernos

TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD AND THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FOOD SECURITY

House Bill No. 7349, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING TELECOMMUTING IN THE WORKPLACE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Del Rosario

TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 7350, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING FOR A MANDATORY SHIFT OF THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR OF ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS”

By Representative Gonzales (A.D.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 7351, entitled:

“AN ACT ADJUSTING THE PENALTIES FOR THE VIOLATION OF THE TRUTH IN LENDING ACT, AMENDING SEC. 6 OF RA NO. 3765 THEREOF”

By Representative Romero

TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

House Bill No. 7352, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8479, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE DOWNSTREAM OIL INDUSTRY DEREGULATION ACT’”

By Representative Go (M.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY

House Bill No. 7353, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION (OBE) IN THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON
HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 7354, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING JOB PLACEMENT
OFFICES IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS TO
PROVIDE CAREER SERVICES TO THE
YOUTH”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND
EMPLOYMENT

House Bill No. 7356, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN
ESPERANZA, MASBATE, PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Lanete
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7357, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE CAWAYAN
DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN CAWAYAN,
MASBATE INTO A TERTIARY HOSPITAL,
UNDER THE FULL ADMINISTRATIVE
AND TECHNICAL SUPERVISION OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, WHICH
SHALL BE KNOWN AS THE CAWAYAN
PUBLIC HOSPITAL, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Lanete
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7358, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN DIMASALANG,
MASBATE, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Lanete
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 7359, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING PUBLIC
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENTITIES TO
PROVIDE NATIONWIDE MOBILE NUMBER
PORTABILITY TO SUBSCRIBERS”

By Representative Nieto
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

House Bill No. 7360, entitled:

“AN ACT REDEFINING THE TERM ‘INDIGENT

SENIOR CITIZEN’ UNDER REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 7492, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC
ACT NO. 9994, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
THE ‘EXPANDED SENIOR CITIZENS ACT
OF 2010’”

By Representative Nieto

TO THE COMMITTEE ON POPULATION AND
FAMILY RELATIONS

House Bill No. 7361, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING THE SAFETY OF
RESIDENTS, TENANTS AND GUESTS,
ESPECIALLY CHILDREN, IN BUILDINGS,
WHETHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE, WITH
TWO (2) MORE FLOORS, THROUGH
THE INSTALLATION OF PROTECTIVE
DEVICES OR STRUCTURES TO PREVENT
ACCIDENTAL FALLING OR SUICIDE”

By Representative Gomez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT

House Bill No. 7364, entitled:

“AN ACT RATIONALIZING THE GRANT
AND ADMINISTRATION OF FISCAL
INCENTIVES”

By Representatives Garin (S.) and Batocabe
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND
MEANS

House Bill No. 7368, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING MANILA COCKERS
CLUB, INC., A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT,
OPERATE AND MAINTAIN COCKPIT
ARENAS IN THE PROVINCES OF CAVITE,
LAGUNA, OR BATANGAS; AND TO
ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN
OFF-COCKPIT BETTING STATIONS
THROUGHOUT THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Loyola
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE
FRANCHISES

House Bill No. 7369, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE PROVINCE OF
CATANDUANES AS THE ABACA CAPITAL
OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Sarmiento (C.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
AND FOOD

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1754, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE LACK OF GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION ON THE WORSENING CROP INFESTATION IN SEVERAL PARTS OF EASTERN VISAYAS, AND RECOMMEND MEASURES THAT WILL ADDRESS THE SITUATION OF THE AFFECTED PEASANT FAMILIES”

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

House Resolution No. 1755, entitled:

“RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ENCAMPMENT BY THE MILITARY OF PUBLIC PLACES AND NEAR SCHOOLS, THREAT, HARASSMENT, AND INTIMIDATION OF PERSONS, AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY THE 20TH INFANTRY BATTALION OF THE PHILIPPINE ARMY IN BARANGAY SAN MIGUEL, LAS NAVAS, NORTHERN SAMAR”

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

House Resolution No. 1756, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON MUSLIM AFFAIRS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, TO DETERMINE THE PRESENT STATE OF BANGON MARAWI COMPREHENSIVE REHABILITATION AND RECOVERY PROGRAM AS MANDATED BY ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 03, AS AMENDED, CREATING AN INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE FOR THE RECOVERY, RECONSTRUCTION, AND REHABILITATION OF THE CITY OF MARAWI AND OTHER AFFECTED LOCALITIES”

By Representatives Sangcopan and Mending
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1758, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION SEEKING TO RECTIFY THE UNLAWFUL APPOINTMENT OF CESAR GILBERT ADRIANO AS DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF THE PHILIPPINES LAST MARCH 2017 IN VIOLATION OF ARTICLE IV, SECTION 31 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9246 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PHILIPPINE LIBRARIANSHIP ACT OF 2003”

By Representative Alejano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1759, entitled:

“RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT 4670 OR THE MAGNA CARTA FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS ON FREE COMPULSORY MEDICAL EXAMINATION AND TREATMENT AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURIES”

By Representatives Tinio and Castro (F.L.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1760, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION BY THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE ON THE LACK OF INTELLIGENCE BY THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE WHICH LED TO THE SIEGE OF MARAWI CITY”

By Representatives Dimaporo (A.), Dimaporo (M.K.) and Papandayan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Joint Resolution No. 20, entitled:

“JOINT RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING THE AMOUNT OF ONE BILLION ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-ONE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED TEN THOUSAND PESOS (P1,161,710,000.00) FOR THE HOSPITAL EXPENSES OF CHILDREN VACCINATED WITH DENG VAXIA”

By Representative Gonzales (A.D.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

Message dated March 8, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on March 7, 2018 adopted House Concurrent Resolution No. 14, entitled:

“CONCURRENT RESOLUTION AMENDING HOUSE BILL NO. 6104, ENTITLED ‘AN ACT CONVERTING THE LICOP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BARANGAY LICOP, MATI CITY, PROVINCE OF DAVAO ORIENTAL INTO AN INTEGRATED SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS LICOP INTEGRATED SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR’”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Message dated March 8, 2018, informing the House of Representatives that on March 7, 2018, the

Senate designated Senator Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay as an additional conferee to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the conflicting provisions of Senate Bill No. 1461, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES EMERGENCY AND RESILIENCY FUND AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

and House Bill No. 7054, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES EMERGENCY AND RESILIENCY FUND, PROVIDING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR”

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated February 13, 2018 of Secretary Adelino B. Sitoy, Presidential Adviser on Legislative Affairs and Head, Presidential Legislative Liaison Office, submitting the details on Appropriations, Obligations and Disbursements for the month ending January 31, 2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated 13 February 2018 of Grace Relucio Princesa, Assistant Secretary, Department Legislative Liaison Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs, submitting the breakdown of the International Commitments Fund under the 2018 General Appropriations Act.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report by the Special Committee on Reforestation (Committee Report No. 656), re H.B. No. 7373, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING THE PLANTING OF TREES FOR ANY CONSTRUCTION OF RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 772 and 3290

Sponsors: Representatives Villanueva, Paduano, Aglipay-Villar and Catamco

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Higher and Technical Education (Committee Report No. 657), re H.R. No. 1767, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION TO CONDUCT THE MANDATORY REVIEW OF THE CIVIL ENGINEERING CURRICULUM TO INTEGRATE THERETO RELEVANT ACADEMIC SUBJECTS ON EARTHQUAKE

DESIGN SAFETY, SPECIALLY NEW ENGINEERING AND STRUCTURAL STANDARDS THAT WILL ENSURE THE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF PHILIPPINE BUILDINGS AND CIVIL WORKS, AND THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATION COMMISSION TO INCLUDE EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING DESIGN AS A TOPIC IN THE CIVIL ENGINEERING LICENSURE EXAMINATION”

recommending its adoption pursuant to House Resolution No. 1217, together with the Committee’s findings and recommendations

Sponsors: Representatives Hofer and Gonzales (A.D.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Justice, the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Ways and Means (Committee Report No. 658), re H.B. No. 7376, entitled:

“AN ACT FURTHER STRENGTHENING THE OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (OSG) BY INCREASING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND REDEFINING, EXPANDING, AND RATIONALIZING ITS ORGANIZATION, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9417, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 2327, AND EXECUTIVE ORDER NOS. 1 AND 2, S. 1986, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 350, 547, 3275, 4748, 5216 and 5233

Sponsors: Representatives Umali, Nograles (K.A.) Cua, Alvarez (P.), Fariñas and Veloso

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Public Order and Safety (Committee Report No. 659), re H.B. No. 5236, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE RANK CLASSIFICATION IN THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 28 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6975, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1990’ ”

recommending its approval with amendment

Sponsor: Representative Acop

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms (Committee Report No. 660), re H.B. No. 7378, entitled:

“AN ACT POSTPONING THE MAY 14, 2018 SYNCHRONIZED BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN ELECTIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9164, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9340, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10656, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10923 AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10952”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills Numbered 7072, 7128, 7167 and 7217
Sponsors: Representatives Tugna, Pimentel, Panganiban, Umali and Sarmiento (E.M.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of guests of the Hon. Teddy Brawner Baguilat, Jr., Congressman, Lone District of Ifugao. They are 22 students and four teacher-guests from various schools in Ifugao, namely: Kiangan National High School, Saint Joseph School and Ifugao State University.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please rise to be recognized, the guests of Congressman Baguilat. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, may we please acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Divine Grace C. Yu from the First District of Zamboanga del Sur. They are the members of the Philippine Councilors League from the different municipalities of the First District of Zamboanga del Sur.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please rise to be recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, may we please acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Magnolia C. Antonino, Fourth District of Nueva Ecija. They are the members of the Nueva Ecija Court #31 Order of the Amaranth.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please rise to be recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, may we please recognize the honorable Dep. Minority Leader Rep. Jose “Lito” L. Atienza Jr. of BUHAY Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Honorable Atienza is recognized. What is the pleasure of the honorable Gentleman?

REP. ATIENZA. We would like to bring to the attention of this Body a very important matter that is now affecting the City of Manila and the whole country as well simply because we are missing a national treasure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). You may proceed.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE OF REP. ATIENZA

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We stand today on a matter of personal and collective privilege to bring to the attention of the Members of Congress, this particular Congress, that in Manila, there used to be a national treasure in the Office of the Mayor. Ito po iyong obra maestra, a masterpiece of art done by our National Artist Botong Francisco. This was commissioned by the City of Manila using the money of the people of Manila, and commissioned by the good Mayor, Mayor Antonio Villegas of the City of Manila, to be done by the great artist Botong Francisco. This is not an ordinary painting, Mr. Speaker. It is a painting that depicts the historical and cultural character of the islands. Hindi po ito isang piraso, ito po ay isang mural na bumibilang ng 40 metro, 40 meters of a masterpiece that the great artist Botong Francisco created before he passed away in 1968.

In 1965 when this was finished, the halls of the Mayor’s office, the reception hall of the Mayor’s office was decorated by this masterpiece. Lahat po ng pumupunta sa Maynila ay nakakakita ng isang obra maestra, larawan ng ating minamahal na bansang Pilipinas sa pamamagitan po ng kulay na iginuhit ng ating National Artist Botong Francisco. Ito po ay nag-umpisa sa term ng present mayor, Mayor Erap Estrada. Napansin ko po noong ako ay pumunta sa kanyang panunumpa, wala na po iyong painting at ito ay napalitan ng isang duplicate made of a tarpaulin material, done, I am sure, to replace the masterpiece of Botong Francisco.

Noong amin pong siniyasat at tinanong saan napunta ang national treasure na ito, na wala pong maaaring magbigay ng halaga at kung ito ay eestimahin, bilyon-bilyong piso ang halaga nito, pero hindi pupuwedeng ito ay tawaran sapagkat ito ay hindi na mauulit muli. This is a piece that will go on for centuries, which Manilans and Filipinos can be proud of. Ang sinabi nila, ito raw po ay pinapa-restore. By whom and by what authority, wala po silang isinagot. Nagdaan ang maraming taon—2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 at ngayon po ay 2018, but the painting is still not there. Kahapon po, ako ay nagpunta roon at siniyasat ko, at nakita ko po talaga na tarpaulin pa rin ang nakakabit at iyong painting na original ay wala po roon.

Kaya ang akin pong mensahe sa ating lahat

ngayon sa hapon ito ay dapat lang siyasatin ng ating Kongreso kung saan napunta ang painting na ito ng ating dakilang pintor and National Artist, the one and only Botong Francisco. Nasaan po, saan dinala ito at kung sino man ang nagbigay ng authority to bring it out of the premises of City Hall of Manila should be made to explain, at kung itong ating kasalukuyang mayor po naman ay may ginagawa, hayaan natin siyang magsabi at magpaliwanag. Ano ang ginagawa upang maibalik muli itong obra maestra na ito? Sapagkat ito ay maituturing nating pinakamalaking pagnanakaw—sasabihin ko pong pagnanakaw sapagkat kung wala pa hanggang ngayon ay malamang ninakaw. Kung ito po ay hindi maibabalik, kailangan panagutin ang lahat ng kinaaukulan.

We cannot let it go, we cannot let it pass without this Congress taking note that if it can be done in the capital city of Manila where a masterpiece of a maestro can disappear and continue to disappear, it can happen anywhere. Whether we are in the city of Cebu or city of Abra or any city in the Philippines where national treasures are kept, we can lose all of them without anybody complaining. So, I am filing this information today in this Chamber and unless we get an answer immediately from those concerned—Mayor Erap, we are appealing to you. Do something about it, otherwise, we will have to do something about it through the people of Manila and the people of the Philippines. This is not just a property of Manila, this is a property of the national heritage, the property of each and every Filipino because we should be proud of our history, of our culture and character as a people.

Doon po sa painting na iyon, naisalarawan ni Botong Francisco ang simula ng ating bansa bago dumating ang Kastila, bago dumating ang mga Tsino, bago dumating ang mga Ingles, bago dumating ang Hapon, bago dumating ang mga Amerikano—nandoon lahat sa larawang iyon na maaari nating ipagmalaki sapagkat ang binibigyan ng halaga roon ay kung papaano nanatili ang ating minamahal na bansang Pilipinas na maging malaya at nakatayo sa kanyang sariling paa.

We have to defend our heritage and we have to value our culture; otherwise, we are lost as a nation. So, this message should ring in the ears of those concerned. Produce the painting or we take action.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.H.). Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of the Hon. Lito Atienza be referred to the Committee on Rules.

REP. CASTRO (F.H.). Mr. Speaker, I want to interpellate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Hon. Fredenil “Fred” H. Castro is recognized.

REP. CASTRO (F.H.). May I know if the Gentleman from Manila will yield to a few questions?

REP. ATIENZA. To be interpellated is an honor but I do not know whether the Majority Leader would allow it.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. I would be honored to be interpellated by the Gentleman.

REP. BONDOC. With the indulgence of our honorable colleagues, the Hon. Fred Castro and the honorable speaker now, the Hon. Lito Atienza, we would just like to take time out to acknowledge the presence of very distinguished guests in the gallery before they proceed with their interpellation. Mr. Speaker, these guests had come to pay respect to Congress with regard to a bill pending before it. Before they return to their official duties, we would like to acknowledge their presence, with the indulgence of the Gentlemen on the floor.

REP. CASTRO (F.H.). We will defer to the pleasure of the distinguished Majority Leader, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader will proceed.

REP. BONDOC. Thank you to our esteemed colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, dear colleagues, just today, the Committee Report No. 658 on House Bill No. 7376, entitled: AN ACT FURTHER STRENGTHENING THE OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (OSG) BY INCREASING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND REDEFINING, EXPANDING, AND RATIONALIZING ITS ORGANIZATION, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9417, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 2327, AND EXECUTIVE ORDER NOS. 1 AND 2, S. 1986, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, was included in our Reference of Business and referred to the Committee on Rules.

We would like to congratulate the Committee on Justice, its honorable Chair, Chairman Reynaldo

V. Umali, and at the same time, we would like to acknowledge the presence of our guests and congratulate them. We have in the gallery, Mr. Speaker, our esteemed Solicitor General Jose C. Calida, and along with him is Asst. Solicitors General Alex Salvador, Joseph Guevarra, Hazel Acantilado and Rex Bernardo Pascual.

Mr. Speaker, the honorable Solicitor General and his team from the OSG family. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives, Solicitor General Calida and his group. *(Applause)*

REP. BONDOC. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move again for the recognition of the esteemed Gentleman from the Party-List BUHAY, the Hon. Lito Atienza.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Hon. Lito Atienza and the Deputy Speaker Fred Castro are both recognized.

REP. BONDOC. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). You may proceed with your interpellation, Deputy Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.H.). Mr. Speaker, my dear colleague, ako ay tumayo bagamat ang inyong talumpati sa bulwagang ito ay maikli at maaaring palipasin ng Representasyong ito na hindi nagtatanong ng anumang katanungan, subalit ako ay naniniwala, Mr. Speaker, my dear colleague, sa inyong paninindigan at sa inyong isiniwalat na ang iginuhit ni Botong Francisco ay hindi pag-aari ninuman, bagkus, ito ay pag-aari ng bansang Pilipinas at ng bawat Pilipino.

Ang aking katanungan lamang sa aking kaibigan at iginagalang na Representante ng Lungsod ng Maynila ay, sinabi mo na ang larawan o ang iginuhit ni Botong Francisco ay nawala at ito ay hindi na makita sa lugar na kung saan ito ay nakikita noon. Sinabi mo rin, Kgg. Lito Atienza, na ang ipinalit dito ay isang tarpaulin. Maaari mo bang sabihin sa amin kung ano ang nakikita sa tarpaulin na ito?

REP. ATIENZA. Iyon pong tarpaulin, Mr. Speaker, is a direct copy, printed copy of the original but of course, wala po dito iyong kulay at guhit ng maestro. Ito po ay printed copy kaya iyong kulay ay malabsaw o malabo at iyong diin, iyong damdamin ng obra maestra ay hindi maililipat sa tarpaulin.

Kaya iyon po ang nandoon sa tinatawag nating Bulwagang Rodriguez or Bulwagang Katipunan ngayon, sapagkat iyon ang talagang ipinagmamalaki ng Lungsod ng Maynila, ng bawat Manilenyo, na mayroon

tayong Bulwagang Katipunan kung saan ang obra maestra ni Botong Francisco ay nakikita ng lahat—bata, matanda, babae, lalaki, turista, banyaga, lokal—at nasasabing, “Sino ang gumawa nito, napakaganda?” Pag-aralan ninyo, kung kayo ay iikot doon, makikita ninyo ang kasaysayan ng ating kapuluan, magmula kay Rajah Sulayman hanggang sa humantong tayo sa ating kalayaan noong Hulyo 4, 1946.

Kaya maganda po na tanungin natin, sino ang nagpalabas ng obra maestra na ito?

Kung ito man, tulad ng sabi nila, ay nire-restore, sino ang nag-restore, professional po ba? Kung ito po naman ay nire-restore, ay limang taon na po ang nagdaan. For five years, it has been outside its natural place in history kaya kailangang ibalik na, at kung hindi po natin pupunahin, mawawala nang tuluyan ito at wala po namang naghahanap. Tungkulin ng Kongresong ito na tanungin kung sino ang may hawak nito at kailan ibabalik iyan sa lugar na karapat-dapat?

REP. CASTRO (F.H.). Sasang-ayon ba ang aking pinagpipitagang Representante ng Lungsod ng Maynila kung aking sabihin na kahit anong ganda man ang ipinalit sa orihinal na bersyon ng iginuhit ni Carlo Modesto Villaluz “Botong” Francisco, na ayon sa aking iginagalang na Representante ng Maynila ay hindi mapapalitan ang orihinal na bersiyon na iginuhit ni Botong Francisco?

REP. ATIENZA. Gaya po ng damdamin ng ating kagalang-galang na Kongresista Fred Castro, alam ko ang kanyang damdamin—makasaysayan, makulay, makabayan at punong-puno ng pagmamahal sa ating pagkatao. Kaya kung ano ang nararamdaman ni Congressman Castro ay iyon din po naman ang nananaig sa akin.

Humihingi po tayo ng sagot at hihingi ako ng kasagutan sa aking isiniwalat na ito. Whoever is holding this masterpiece must come out and declare his intentions. Kung ito ay itinatago nila, hahanapin po namin ito at ito ay hindi maitatago sapagkat napakalaki po nito at hindi maaaring itago ninuman. Kung sino man ang nagbigay ng permiso upang ito ay ilabas sa city hall ng Maynila, ay kailangang magpaliwanag at kung sino man ang nagbigay ng kapangyarihan na ito ay galawin, kailangang magpaliwanag din. Subalit ang kailangang mangyari pagkatapos ng ating pagsisiwalat na ito ay maibalik ang obra maestra upang si Congressman Castro at ang inyong lingkod ay masiyahan na makita nating ito muli, na malayang binibigyan natin ng karangalan sa isang paraang tama ang pagkatao nating mga Pilipino.

Iyong obra maestra na iyon ay tungkol po sa Pilipino, mula kay Rajah Sulayman hanggang doon sa tayo ay nagkamit ng ating kalayaan. Dumaan ang

maraming siglo at dumaan ang maraming yugto kung saan tayo ay sinakop at tayo ay nakabangon. Ito ay magbibigay ng inspirasyon hindi lamang sa atin kundi sa mga kabataan na pumupunta roon at nakikita ang ating kasaysayan. It should be protected as it is protected by law and so, those responsible must be made to explain why it is still not in its proper place.

REP. CASTRO (F.H.). Kung may ilalabas na kaparehong iginuhit at ang itsura o larawang ito ay halos kapareho ng nawawalang painting ni Botong Francisco, makikilala ba ito at mayroon bang isang tao na may sapat na kaalaman upang makilala ang orihinal at hindi orihinal na gawa o guhit ni Botong Francisco?

REP. ATIENZA. Napakadali po naman Mr. Speaker, na makilala sapagkat iyong peke, alam ninyong peke ito dahil sa tarpaulin naka-imprenta at iyong orihinal ay nasa canvas na talagang ginuhit ng ating bantog na pintor at National Artist na si Botong Francisco. Hindi po puwedeng itago ang katotohanan.

Ngayon ang nakalagay doon sa city hall ng Maynila ay kopya. It is a poor copy of the original and therefore, it cannot be mistaken as the original because the colors are different, the shades are different, and the emotions portrayed in the painting are not there. Alam ninyo, iyong orihinal ay mayroong emosyon—andoon iyong galak ng Pilipinas, iyong pagmamalaki ng Pilipino sa ating karangalan bilang Pilipino, nandoon lahat at mararamdaman ninyo sa orihinal. Dito po sa tarpaulin copy, wala pong damdamin kayong mararamdaman sapagkat ito ay kopya at hindi orihinal. Katulad po ni Congressman Castro, siya ay orihinal at katangi-tangi. There is only one Congressman Fredenil Castro na kikilala sa kanyang paninindigan para sa ating bayan. There cannot be a copy of Congressman Castro. Ano man ang gawin ng ibang tao, hindi nila makokopya si Congressman Fredenil Castro.

Ganoon din po naman ang kalagayan ng isang obra maestra. It cannot be copied and we cannot accept the copy. Only the original will satisfy this question: Where is the masterpiece of Botong Francisco? Otherwise, we will have to take a more drastic action against those who manipulated its disappearance.

REP. CASTRO (F.H.). Mr. Speaker, kagalang-galang na Representante Lito Atienza, maaari mo bang isiwalat sa bulwagang ito kung sino ang nakaupo na Alkalde ng Maynila noong napuna mo na itong obra maestra ni Botong Francisco ay nawawala na sa city hall ng Maynila?

REP. ATIENZA. Alam ko po, Mr. Speaker, noong sumumpa ang kasalukuyang alkalde noong June 30, 2013, ay wala na po iyong painting doon. Malamang,

ang nagbigay po ng paraan, awtoridad o kaya ang siyang nagbigay ng pamumuno sa paglabas nitong obra maestra ay iyong dating alkalde na nakaupo bago po dumating ang Alkalde Joseph “Erap” Ejercito Estrada, si Mayor Alfredo Lim. Kaya kasama po siya sa ating tatanungin. Iyan ba ay sinundan ninyo? Iyan ba ay binigyan ninyo ng paraan upang ilabas? Alam ba ninyo kung nasaan ito ngayon at kailan ibabalik ang obra maestra na ito? He will have to answer these queries, as Mayor Joseph “Erap” E. Estrada should be made to answer too. Baka naman nakalimutan nila, ano? Puwede namang nakalimutan na noong dalawa sapagkat, alam ninyo kapag nagkakaedad na ang isang tao ay nakakalimutan iyong mga ginawa sa nakaraang mga taon. Kaya kinakailangang ipaalala natin sa hapong ito. Kung nakakalimutan ninyo, isipin ninyo at panagutan ninyo ang inyong desisyon. That is the purpose of this message to all concerned.

REP. CASTRO (F.H.). Mr. Speaker, sa aking pinagpipitagang Representante ng Maynila, sinubukan mo bang tanungin ang nakaluklok na Mayor ng Lungsod ng Maynila ngayon kung nasaan ang obra maestro na nawawala sa city hall ng Maynila?

REP. ATIENZA. Ang Mayor po ngayon, alam nating lahat, ay si Mayor Erap Estrada, ang ating dating Pangulo, at alam ko naman ang kanyang pagmamahal sa sining at kalinangan. Siya po naman ay isinilang sa panahon natin na sa sining at kalinangan ay buo ang ating paggalang. So, I am appealing to him as I call his attention, at kung nakakalimutan niya, ay ipinapaalala ko na iyong obra maestra ay kailangang ibalik sa city hall ng Maynila.

REP. CASTRO (F.H.). Siya ba ay inyong sinubukan na tanungin?

REP. ATIENZA. Kung naaalala ko po ay sumulat na nga po kami para maging pormal ang pagtatanong sa isyung ito.

REP. CASTRO (F.H.). Siya ba naman ay sumagot sa inyong sulat, G. Lito Atienza?

REP. ATIENZA. Wala po kaming sagot e baka hindi rin nabasa iyong sulat sapagkat, alam ninyo, patung-patong ang mga papel ng isang Mayor at kung minsan ay hindi talaga nababasa ang lahat ng mga sulat.

REP. CASTRO (F.H.). Naitanong ko iyan sapagkat maaaring kung siya ay may ideya kung nasaan itong obra maestra na ating pinag-uusapan ngayon ay hindi na kailangang mag-imbetiga pa ang Mababang Kapulungan kung siya ay may kasagutan.

REP. ATIENZA. Basta lang maibalik po iyong painting at mailagay muli doon sa Bulwagang Katipunan na aming ikinararangal na pook pulungan para sa lahat ng mga pumupunta sa city hall ng Maynila. Basta maibalik ay wala na po tayong isyu dahil hindi na kailangang siyasatin kung sino pa ang nakialam doon, kung ano ba ang nangyari, kung magkano ang ibinayad. Basta ang importante po ngayon ay maibalik sa kanyang dapat na kinalalagyan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). May I just remind the Gentleman on the floor that the time is up.

REP. CASTRO (F.H.). I would have asked, Mr. Speaker, for an extension because this is a very important issue. Nonetheless, this Representation will defer to the observation of the honorable Gentleman. At this point in time, Mr. Speaker, I am thanking the Gentleman from Manila for having brought this matter to the attention of the House of Representatives and because of its importance, that obra maestra of Botong Francisco has to be restored to the people of this country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. I would like to thank the Gentleman, Congressman, Deputy Speaker Castro for displaying his interest in the issue that we have brought forth.

Maraming, maraming salamat po sa kanya.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Magtutulongan po tayo sa isyung ito.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. I move that we recognize Rep. Edcel C. Lagman, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. I have some questions to propound to the distinguished Party-List Representative of BUHAY.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Hon. Edcel Lagman is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. May we ask for an extension of the period?

REP. HERRERA-DY. Yes. Mr. Speaker,

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, may I move that we extend for another 10 minutes.

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

REP. LAGMAN. Will the distinguished Gentleman yield to some questions?

REP. ATIENZA. Alam po ninyo, basta kayo ay tinatanong nitong ating Miyembrong ang ngalan ay Congressman Edcel Lagman ay dapat pong ikarangal ninyo iyan sapagkat ang kanyang isipan ay masaliksik, mapanuri, matalino at punung-puno ng kaalaman. Salamat po.

REP. LAGMAN. First, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the distinguished Representative from BUHAY Party-List for ventilating this very important issue on the reported missing cultural heritage artwork of no less than the National Artist for Visual Arts, Carlos Modesto Villaluz “Botong” Francisco. May we know from the distinguished Gentleman since when has this masterpiece been missing?

REP. ATIENZA. Sa akin pong sariling kaalaman, Mr. Speaker, alam ninyo, hindi ako masyadong nagpupunta sa city hall. Nagpunta lang ako roon noong nanumpa ang kasalukuyang Mayor at napansin ko po iyong mural sa paligid ng Bulwagang Katipunan ay wala na po itong kulay at sigla, nawala iyong tinatawag nating energy. Noong tiningnan ko po iyong mural, aba ay kaya naman pala nawala iyong ganoong uring damdamin ay wala na po iyong obra maestra doon. Ang nandoon po ay iyong tarpaulin na duplicate copy noong original. Noong 2013 pa ako nagpunta at hindi na po ako nagbalik doon. Tiningnan ko lamang kahapon kung nandoon na pero wala pa ito. Nakita ko na wala pa rin po iyong painting doon e limang taon na po ang nakalipas. Therefore, it is time to take action and to inform the whole nation about this mystery of the missing masterpiece.

REP. LAGMAN. May we know from the distinguished Gentleman whether he had written or

caused to be written a letter seeking information from the former Mayors of Manila in recent times to find out whether they are aware of the whereabouts of this masterpiece?

REP. ATIENZA. Ang akin pong tinanong, Mr. Speaker, ay iyong kasalukuyang Mayor sapagkat hindi na natin puwedeng tanungin pa iyong nakaraan. Iyong kasalukuyan ang dapat mayroong kaalaman at mayroong maisasagot. Wala po naman kaming sagot na malinaw na natanggap kung hindi iyong impormasyon na dumadaan sa mga kaibigan namin na ito ay ibabalik din daw, pero ang sabi ko nga sa inyo, limang taon na ang nakakaraan, hindi puwedeng hindi ibalik ito at kailangan ibalik ito sa lalong madaling panahon.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. We are talking about an artwork entitled “Kasaysayan ng Maynila”. Is that correct?

REP. ATIENZA. “Kasaysayan ng Maynila” na may kaugnayan sa bansa...

REP. LAGMAN. Okay.

REP. ATIENZA. ... sapagkat ang mga larawan doon ay hindi po naman tungkol sa Maynila lang. Andoon po iyong mga nagdaan sa ating kapuluan at iyong kasaysayan ng lungsod ay nakikita natin sa pamamagitan ng obra maestra na ito na may kaugnayan sa kabuuan ng ating bansa.

REP. LAGMAN. I am informed, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Gentleman, that Botong Francisco executed or created this artwork sometime in the 1950s. Are you aware of that?

REP. ATIENZA. 1963.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay.

REP. ATIENZA. Tama po iyon.

REP. LAGMAN. More or less, how many years had elapsed?

REP. ATIENZA. More than 50 years na po sapagkat 2018 na po ngayon.

REP. LAGMAN. More than half a century, definitely.

REP. ATIENZA. Half a century, tama po.

REP. LAGMAN. Artworks of this ancestry would need restoration. Is that correct?

REP. ATIENZA. Tama po iyon.

REP. LAGMAN. Artworks of such magnificent creation would have to be placed in an area conducive to their protection from the elements.

REP. ATIENZA. Tama rin po iyon.

REP. LAGMAN. Tama iyon. Is it possible, distinguished Gentleman, that this artwork has been transferred to the National Museum for restoration?

REP. ATIENZA. Anything is possible as of now because it is not there. Kaya nga po ang katanungan ko ay sino nga ba ang may hawak? Kung magsasalita ngayon ang National Museum na nasa kanila ito, magtatanong pa rin po ang inyong lingkod: Bakit ninyo kinuha? Sino ang nag-authorize sa inyo, at para malaman po ito ng buong lungsod—who authorized anyone to restore, at what cost, and what are the parameters of your commission? At kailan po ninyo ibabalik iyan? Hindi pupuwede pong sabihin na “Amin na iyan.” Ano ito, topo-topo barega, dumila ka sa baga? “Kami na ang may hawak kaya amin na”—hindi po puwede iyon.

Iyan ay pag-aari ng bawat Manilenyo at ang kanilang pagkakaalam ay nandoon pa sa Bulwagang Katipunan ang obra maestra. So, if there is any story to tell, let each and every Manileño know the real score and what is being done about the painting.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Before the distinguished Gentleman took the floor this afternoon, was there any verification made by him to the National Museum whether this artwork is with the National Museum?

REP. ATIENZA. Wala po kaming pagtatanong na ginawa sapagkat simple po ang issue—may kumuha ng painting. Walang sumagot noong kami ay nagtatanong kung sino ang may hawak nito ngayon. Binalikan ko ito pero wala pa rin po iyong painting. Bakit naman ako magtatanong kung nasaan iyong painting? Ang tinatanong ko po ay iyong Mayor ng Maynila ngayon sapagkat iyon ay tanggapan niya at kailangang sagutin niya. Nasaan iyong painting at kailan po ibabalik iyong painting kung ito ay nasa kamay ng pamahalaan? Pero hindi puwedeng mawala ang painting na walang kasulatan, all in the name of good intentions.

May kasabihan tayo, I am sure the Gentleman will agree with me, “the road to hell is paved with good intentions.” Lahat po ay magagandang intensiyon

Alam po ba ninyo na kapisaso lang ng painting na iyon, iyong kapisaso lang, you get a one-meter piece of that painting and that will give you millions of pesos. But the whole painting, its price cannot be estimated by anyone because it is priceless, wala pong

masasabing presyo para diyan sapagkat wala na po iyong ating national artist na gumuhit niyan at wala na pong makakakopya niyan.

REP. LAGMAN. Okay. Well, the road to hell may lead to the National Museum if proper verification is conducted.

Mr. Speaker, 10 minutes ago I called up a responsible personnel, an official of the National Museum, and he confirmed to me that the artwork of Botong Francisco entitled: “Kasaysayan ng Maynila” has been with the National Museum after it underwent restoration starting 2012. It is now displayed at the Senate Hall of the National Museum. Could you kindly check, distinguished Gentleman, whether this information is true or correct.

REP. ATIENZA. Nagpapasalamat po ang inyong lingkod kay Congressman Lagman. Sabi ko sa inyo, kapag tumayo ang ating kagalang-galang na Kongresista, makinig tayo sapagkat mayroon siyang sasabihing mahalaga. Sa sinabi ninyong iyan, bukas na bukas ako po ay pupunta sa National Museum at tatanungin ko sila, “By what authority are you holding on to the masterpiece?” Because you cannot just hold on to a property of the people of the City of Manila. Ang ibinayad po diyan ay buwis ng mga taga lungsod ng Maynila, kaya hindi puwedeng iyan po ay ariin na lamang ng sino man.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). May I remind the two Gentlemen that the time is up.

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, I am through with my interpellation and I would like, again, to thank the distinguished Gentleman for his speech and for undertaking that, tomorrow, he will check with the National Museum to unravel this mystery.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. I will not only go there, Mr. Speaker, I will write them another letter. Now that the Gentleman has pinpointed a lead where we can start, we will write a strongly-worded letter, the strongest that I can even compose, that they have to return, restore, install this painting where it belongs—in the hall of the people of the City of Manila and not to decorate any portion of the former legislative building, of the National Museum. The natural home of this painting is the Bulwagang Katipunan sa Lungsod ng Maynila. Thank you for the information. It definitely gave us direction on where to start and to make people accountable for their actions.

Salamat po sa kanya at salamat po sa inyo, Mr. Speaker, for giving way to this topic which we have dissected and discussed in this afternoon’s session.

Salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we refer the speech of the Hon. Jose L. Atienza Jr. and the interpellations thereon to the Committee on Rules.

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

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Cristina “Chiqui” Roa-Puno and the Hon. Romeo M. Acop. They are the barangay officials from Barangay Mayamot led by Brgy. Capt. Pablo Oldan, Kgd. Cristina Sarza and Kgd. Edwin Cabalsa; and from Barangay Beverly Hills, Brgy. Capt. Danny Arcilla.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Please rise. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)* The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider bills on Third Reading.

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

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 6285 ON THIRD READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 6285 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on March 7, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6285, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 18 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY FOR ALL *KASAMBAHAY* IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY TO BE KNOWN AS “*ARAW NG KASAMBAHAY*.”

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 74, dated March 13, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 6285
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). With 225 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 6285 is approved on Third Reading. The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7199
ON THIRD READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7199 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on March 7, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7199, entitled: AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO THE DELTA BROADCASTING SYSTEM, INC. TO ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN, AND OPERATE RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS WITHIN THE PHILIPPINES UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7723.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 74, dated March 13, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7199
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). With 226 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 7199 is approved on Third Reading. The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7290
ON THIRD READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7290 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on March 7, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7290, entitled: AN ACT CHANGING THE COMPOSITION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CHILDREN'S TELEVISION, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 6 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8370, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "CHILDREN'S TELEVISION ACT OF 1997."

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 74, dated March 13, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7290
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). With 226 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 7290 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7266
ON THIRD READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7266 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on March 8, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7266, entitled: AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A RURAL EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 74, dated March 13, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7266
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). With 228 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 7266 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7240
ON THIRD READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7240 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on March 8, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7240, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY VEINTE REALES, VALENZUELA CITY, TO BE KNOWN AS VEINTE REALES NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the

Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 74, dated March 13, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7240
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). With 228 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 7240 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7241
ON THIRD READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7241 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on March 8, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7241, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BARANGAY SAN ANTONIO, PARAÑAQUE CITY, TO BE KNOWN AS SILVERIO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 74, dated March 13, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7241
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). With 229 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 7241 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7242
ON THIRD READING

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7242 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on March 8, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7242, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING THE DON FELIX SERRA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – LOMBOYAN EXTENSION IN BARANGAY LOMBOYAN, MUNICIPALITY OF SAN JOAQUIN, PROVINCE OF ILOILO FROM THE DON FELIX SERRA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS STA. ANA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 74, dated March 13, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7242
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). With 229 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 7242 is approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

NOMINAL VOTING ON H.B. NO. 7243
ON THIRD READING

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on Third Reading on House Bill No. 7243 and direct the Secretary General to read the title of the measure, and call the roll for nominal voting.

I so move.

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

Thereupon, the Secretary General read the title of the measure, printed copies of which were distributed to the Members on March 8, 2018, pursuant to Section 58, Rule X of the House Rules.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7243, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING THE TACURONG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – UPPER KATUNGAL ANNEX IN BARANGAY UPPER KATUNGAL, TACURONG CITY, PROVINCE OF SULTAN KUDARAT FROM THE TACURONG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS UPPER KATUNGAL NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

The Chair directed the Secretary General to call the roll for nominal voting. Thereafter, pursuant to the Rules of the House, a second roll call was made. The result of the voting on Third Reading on the aforesaid measure is reflected in Journal No. 74, dated March 13, 2018.*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7243
ON THIRD READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). With 229 affirmative votes, no negative vote and no abstention, House Bill No. 7243 is hereby approved on Third Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7376
ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 7376, contained in Committee Report No. 657, as reported out by the Committee on Justice, Appropriations, and Ways and Means.

May I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

* See ANNEX (printed separately)

With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the measure have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the title thereof without prejudice to inserting its text in the Congressional Record.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7376, entitled: ANACTFURTHERSTRENGTHENING THE OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (OSG) BY INCREASING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, AND REDEFINING, EXPANDING, AND RATIONALIZING ITS ORGANIZATION, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9417, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 2327, AND EXECUTIVE ORDER NOS. 1 AND 2, S. 1986, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, for his sponsorship of the measure, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Second District of Oriental Mindoro, our esteemed Chairman of the Committee on Justice, the Hon. Reynaldo V. Umali. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Chairman of the Committee on Justice, the Hon. Rey Umali, is recognized to sponsor the Bill.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. UMALI

REP. UMALI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Majority Leader and esteemed colleagues in this august Chamber.

I am respectfully submitting for your consideration, House Bill No. 7376, the proposed OSG or Office of the Solicitor General Charter. This Bill seeks to amend R.A. No. 9417 or the OSG Reform Law, and streamline the legal services that the OSG provides to various government offices. In line with the policy of the State to promote simplicity, efficiency, effectiveness and economy in government operations, address the expanding needs of government-owned and-controlled corporations for legal representation, and enhance government efforts to recover ill-gotten wealth and investigate and prosecute cases relative thereto, the functions of the OGCC and the PCGG shall be consolidated under the Office of the Solicitor General. This requires the abolition of the OGCC and the PCGG, and the transfer of their powers and functions to the OSG.

The significant amendments introduced by this Bill pertain to OSG's organizational structure, its expanded powers and functions, increased compensation, benefits and privileges of its personnel, its funding sources, and

the effects of the abolition of the OGCC and PCGG. To make the OSG a truly independent and autonomous office, the OSG shall be attached to the Office of the President for budgetary purposes. To address the integration of functions and meet the burgeoning need of the government for legal services, the Bill seeks to increase the number of legal divisions in the OSG from 30 to 50 divisions, with at least 10 lawyers in each division.

This Bill also expands the powers and functions of the OSG to include those that were exercised by the OGCC and PCGG. For instance, the OSG shall review all GOCC contracts prior to their execution and enforce the Property Insurance Law which, heretofore, are being performed by OGCC pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 10 of the Revised Administrative Code of 1987. In line with the State's policy of ensuring efficiency and economy in the operations of the government, including the effective legal representation of GOCCs, it is also important that the OSG take a more proactive stance in the handling of government transactions. This means ensuring that GOCC contracts strictly conform to existing laws and regulations to avoid future litigation which is not only costly, but also has an adverse effect on the country's investment climate and reputation.

Likewise, the OSG shall have the power to grant immunity from criminal prosecution to any person who provides information or testifies in any investigation previously conducted by the PCGG, or in future cases to be investigated by the OSG, to establish the unlawful manner in which any respondent, defendant or accused has acquired or accumulated ill-gotten wealth, in any case where such information or testimony is necessary to ascertain or prove the latter's guilt or his liability. The PCGG is vested with this power pursuant to Section 5 of Executive Order No. 14, as amended by E.O. No. 14-A, series of 1986.

The Bill also proposes to grant Solicitors the benefits already enjoyed by lawyers in the Public Attorney's Office and the National Prosecution Service. While R.A. No. 9417 already provided that Senior State Solicitors and State Solicitors of the OSG shall have the same rank, salaries and privileges of trial court judges, the benefits provided for under R.A. No. 9946 such as additional retirement, survivorship and other perquisites are enjoyed by the members of the Judiciary only. Given the formidable and sensitive legal duties of the OSG, there is a need to strengthen the institution and provide its lawyers and employees the benefits and privileges already being enjoyed by their counterparts in other government offices. This will ensure that the OSG is able to faithfully, effectively and efficiently perform its mandate to uphold State interest.

The increase in the OSG's share in monetary rewards or assets granted by courts or tribunals to client departments and assets adjudged the government in

forfeiture proceedings will significantly augment the office's funds to ensure proper implementation of the proposed measure, particularly the expanded benefits provided therein, without being overly dependent on the annual appropriations. This can, in the long run, enhance the proposed fiscal autonomy for the office and lessen the need for appropriations from the national government's budget. Furthermore, the grant of the authority to borrow addresses the urgent need of the OSG to acquire and construct its own office building, and improve the working conditions and capacity development.

For the foregoing reasons, the expeditious passage of this Bill is earnestly sought.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and my esteemed colleagues, as I enjoin support from the Members for the approval of this measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7376

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 7376.

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7303 *Continuation*

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 7303 contained in Committee Report No. 640 and for this, that we please direct our Secretary General to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 7303, entitled: AN ACT INSTITUTING ABSOLUTE DIVORCE AND DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE IN THE PHILIPPINES.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status is that, while we had terminated the period of sponsorship and debate on this measure yesterday, I

now move that we reconsider the termination of the period of sponsorship and debate to accommodate further interpellations from the Hon. Raul Del Mar. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the distinguished Gentleman from the First District of Albay, the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman, to sponsor the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Hon. Edcel Lagman is recognized to continue with his sponsorship.

REP. DEFENSOR. Also, Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from Cebu, the Hon. Raul V. Del Mar, to continue with his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Likewise, the Honorable Del Mar is recognized to continue with his interpellation.

REP. DEL MAR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Deputy Majority Leader.

May I first quote just two sections of the Constitution before I continue my interpellation, and this is in connection with Article XV on the Family, Section 2 which provides that: "Marriage, as an inviolable social institution, is the foundation of the family and shall be protected by the State"; and Section 1 which states: "The State recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation. Accordingly, it shall strengthen its solidarity and actively promote its total development." The reason I quoted these two sections, Mr. Speaker and distinguished Sponsor, is that this measure directly violates these two sections of the Constitution because, first, with the recognition of marriage as an inviolable social institution and second, as the foundation of the family, then marriage should be protected by the State.

In this case, the measure does the opposite. Instead of protecting the family, the marriage, the State is doing harm to marriage. Before I continue, I know that the distinguished Sponsor would like to comment on this.

REP. LAGMAN. What is the question, Mr. Speaker?

REP. DEL MAR. The provision that marriage, as an inviolable social institution, is the foundation of the family and shall be protected by the State—this measure, instead of the State protecting marriage, is actually doing harm to marriage.

REP. LAGMAN. The question is, whether this Bill does harm to marriage ...

REP. DEL MAR. That is right, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. ... and is in violation of the constitutional precepts on marriage as a social institution and as the foundation of the family. To place it in its proper perspective, the question really would assail the constitutionality of this measure.

We had already underscored in our sponsorship speech that despite the adoption by the Constitution of the tenets of marriage as a social institution and as a foundation of the family, the Commissioners of the 1986 Constitutional Commission which drafted the present Constitution, were unanimous in asserting that the foregoing principles do not prevent or foreclose the Congress from enacting a divorce law. Among the advocates of this position was Father Joaquin Bernas, a very active, articulate, and authoritative Catholic prelate. Risking redundancy, we are going to again quote the proceedings of the Constitutional Commission on this particular issue.

After Commissioner Chito Gascon introduced the aforesaid concepts of marriage and family, Father Bernas rose to interpellate him in this way:

FR. BERNAS. Just one question, and I am not sure if it has been categorically answered. I refer specifically to the proposal of Commissioner Gascon. Is this to be understood as a prohibition of a general law on divorce?
X X X

MR. GASCON. Mr. Presiding Officer, that was not primarily my intention. My intention was primarily to encourage the social institution of marriage but not necessarily discourage divorce.

Then Father Bernas continued:

FR. BERNAS. No. My question is more categorical. Does this carry the meaning of prohibiting a divorce law?

MR. GASCON. No, Mr. Presiding Officer.

FR. BERNAS. Thank you.
In a subsequent proceeding, the following exchange transpired between Commissioners Jose Bengzon and Maria Teresa Nieva:

MR. BENGZON. Will this in any way preclude Congress from approving a law on divorce?

MRS. NIEVA. We discussed that yesterday and I think we reiterated that it does not.

MR. BENGZON. It does not.

MS. NIEVA. No.

MR. BENGZON. So, even if this section or this sentence is approved, Congress will still have every right to pass a divorce law under certain circumstances as it may deem fit.

It should be underscored, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Members, that no Commissioner posited a dissenting view. As a matter of fact, the Constitution does not prohibit the institution of absolute divorce and the dissolution of marriage despite the acceptance of the concepts of marriage as a social institution and the foundation of the family. I think these proceedings in the Constitutional Commission will categorically document that the present Charter does not prohibit the institution of absolute divorce and the abolition of marriage as contained in the present Bill.

REP. DEL MAR. We thank the Sponsor for the comprehensive answer. We believe, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that no matter what discussions there were, whatever opinions were expressed by those persons identified, we really do not see how those discussions, those opinions can go over the provisions of the Constitution which are clear, so clear that they need no further interpretation or discussion on the matter. But we respect the answer of the honorable Sponsor, so we will move to the second section.

REP. LAGMAN. Just to have a footnote on this discussion, no less than the Supreme Court, in several cases, had given credence to the contemporaneous interpretation of the provisions of the Constitution by the Commissioners who participated in its crafting. Here we see the very Commissioners who drafted the 1987 Constitution telling or saying on record that despite these constitutional precepts on marriage and family, there is no prohibition for this Congress to pass and enact an absolute divorce bill or a bill on the dissolution of marriage.

I would like to underscore also that the Bill continues to protect marriage and that, in several of its provisions, this protection is steadfast and it is a well-entrenched commitment by the State. This Bill is not for happy, vibrant and harmonious marriages which do not need the divorce decree. It is for dysfunctional marriages which are beyond repair, where the State is duty-bound to provide relief to the spouses in distress as well as their children.

REP. DEL MAR. We take note of the answer of the distinguished Sponsor but we really believe that those were opinions under circumstances prevailing then. We are not aware of any specific ruling by the Supreme Court on the matter today, on the specific provision insofar as the measure is related to. So, this

is still something, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, where many interpretations were made, many opinions were expressed but in the final analysis, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, only a specific case on this matter elevated to the Supreme Court, will decide the issue once and for all.

So, this is something that we can put aside now and see how it goes. I am not saying, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that this Representation is going to contest this measure as being unconstitutional. We believe that other quarters, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, will be doing this. It is better that other quarters do it because we are legislators and it is not in order, insofar as I am concerned, for a legislator like this Representation, who is against this measure, to bring the case to court if and when this House, and the Congress itself will approve this measure and enact a law on this.

So, let us go to the second section I quoted, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker:

The State recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation. Accordingly, it shall strengthen its solidarity and actively promote its total development.

Again, the State is called upon to strengthen the solidarity of the family and in this case, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, we see again the opposite that, if the State will approve of this measure, it shall not be strengthening the solidarity of the family but will be weakening the solidarity of the family; and the family is the foundation of the nation.

What opinion or reservations do you have on this point, Your Honor?

REP. LAGMAN. Well, I have the same answer, Your Honor, because in the proceedings of the Constitutional Commission, these issues were already answered despite the fact that there are tenets adopted in the 1987 Constitution which underscores that marriage is a social institution and the foundation of the family; and the Commissioners, with unanimity, said that these tenets enshrined in the Constitution will not prevent Congress from enacting a divorce law. This is because the divorce law does not derogate from the family; it does not derogate from marriage. Still, the State is committed to protect marriage and the family, but in exceptional circumstances where the marriage had degenerated into a dysfunctional relationship beyond rehabilitation or reconciliation, then the State has the duty to intervene and protect the spouses in distress, including their children who would agonize, as they are being exposed to the intermittent or interminable conflict of their parents.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the distinguished Gentleman had consulted the Constitutions of other Catholic countries in Latin

America, in Europe which have similar or identical provisions with our Constitution on marriage and family life. I have, Mr. Speaker, and I found out that these countries which have the same or similar provisions as those of the Philippine Constitution, all have their own divorce legislation.

REP. DEL MAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, whatever other nations will do does not affect our nation, as we are not duty-bound to follow the actions taken by the other nations. On that score, you may say, since we are the only State, aside from the Vatican, which does not have divorce or a divorce law, then why should we have one? But because we are a sovereign country, we decide on our own, and while we may research on what the countries did and why, the bottom line, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, is that it is we alone who will determine the issue of divorce, whether it violates the Constitution or not.

So, in this connection, Your Honor, it is clear that, you know, if the family is the foundation of the nation and it is weakened by the fact that marriage is not protected by the State but it is even harmed by the State and weakened by the State, then it follows that if the foundation of the marriage is eroded, the family, of which the marriage is the foundation, will equally be eroded and this will weaken the entire nation itself.

Anyway, Your Honor, let us go to the provisions of the measure.

REP. LAGMAN. Your Honor, before we go to other parts of the Bill, when we consider guidance from other jurisdictions having similar constitutional provisions, we are not surrendering our sovereignty. We are getting adequate guidance from these other states.

For example, among other provisions, the Constitution of Ireland provides:

The State recognises the family as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of society.

The State, therefore, guarantees to protect the family in its Constitution and authority, as the necessary basis of social order and as indispensable to the welfare of the nation and the State.

These are almost identical provisions of the Philippine Constitution. Ireland, a fiercely Catholic country, had adopted 22 years ago, on June 17, 1996, their law on divorce. Let me also go to another country. This one from Latin America, the State of Colombia, which has a very similar provision to our Constitution on inviolability. It says, under Article 42 and Article 5 of its Constitution, that: "The family's honor, dignity,

and intimacy are inviolable,” but 13 years ago, Colombia, on June 10, 2005, adopted or instituted absolute divorce in their country. It not only adopted absolute divorce, but even implemented regulations on a mutual consent divorce before a notary public through Decree 4436 on November 2005. So here, again, we have another Catholic country, with the same provisions on inviolability of marriage, having its own divorce law and even allowing consensual divorce through a notary public or what is known in Latin America as “notarial divorce.” I am not saying that we should copy these countries’ institution of absolute divorce. What I am saying is, by parity of analogy, they have the same provisions like our Constitution and yet they allow divorce, even notarial divorce.

REP. DEL MAR. Be that as it may, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, whether or not we will have the divorce law is our decision to make. Whatever the other states, the other nations’ sentiments or opinions are, even if they have divorce laws in their countries, that does not mean that they are right and we are wrong.

As we had earlier discussed medical marijuana, there are states and nations that have that, that legalized that, but there are states also that did not legalize that. So, that is why on the basis of those of us who also were against or still against the medical use of marijuana proposal, here in this case, we also focus on instituting or legalizing divorce in the country. While the Gentleman may be a champion for that measure, I am sure that there are other Members in this House who are also against legalizing divorce. Not only us, Your Honor, we believe that other Members of this House will consult their respective districts, their respective constituents, on how they feel on this measure, whether they favor or they are against this measure. After all, we are Representatives of the people, and it is not our sole decision that we must follow. In cases where our personal decision is the same as that of our constituents, there is no problem; but in cases where our constituents are against a particular issue, whatever the decision of the people is, what I am saying is that we will follow, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, Your Honor, with respect to medical marijuana, there is a great disparity in the acceptance of the legalization of marijuana by some countries, in other countries. But in the case of absolute divorce, almost 100 percent of the countries have their own absolute divorce law except the state of Vatican City and the Philippines. If the distinguished Gentleman would rely on the voice of the people, then consistent surveys show that majority of Filipinos, including Catholics, favor absolute divorce.

REP. DEL MAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, this Representation maintains that majority of his constituents are against legalizing divorce and so, even if you say that we are just two out of all the nations in the world which have not legalized divorce, that does not mean that they are right. They all can be wrong and we can be right. So, it does not follow, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, that just because there are a majority of nations which legalized divorce, we are left together with the Vatican only in not having one, in being against the divorce law. I believe they are wrong, the other nations are wrong, and we are right, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. We respect, Your Honor, the opinion of the distinguished Gentleman and his constituents who, he said, are against the Divorce Bill. But that is an opinion of a Representative and we are submitting to the will of the majority of this Chamber as well as to the will of the majority of our people with respect to the legislation on absolute divorce and dissolution of marriage. I hope that after this Bill is put to a vote, and hopefully it gets the endorsement of the majority of the Representatives in this Chamber, then that should foreclose further issues or debate. This is, of course, without saying that anybody can bring a case before the Supreme Court but the Supreme Court, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Members, does not decide on a case when there is no pending issue or actual case.

So, to the statement of the distinguished Gentleman that the Supreme Court has not decided on this issue, of course, it has not because there was no and there has been no case brought before the Supreme Court. He or other Members or other groups can bring the case and it is only then that the Supreme Court will resolve the issue.

REP. DEL MAR. Thank you for that, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. So, let me just say that we maintain, in a democracy, the will of the majority and so, once this is voted upon in the House, whether for or against, if this will be carried by the vote of the majority, then we submit. That is how democracy works, that whatever is the will of the majority, that will prevail. Your Honor, I will reserve my right to disagree with the majority even if I am in the minority and if I submit to the will of the majority, that does not mean that I agree to something that I disagreed with in the first place. But I will submit, as we all do, to the will of the majority.

REP. LAGMAN. We respect, Mr. Speaker, the dissenting view of the distinguished Gentleman from Cebu. Just for the record, in February 2018, the SWS conducted a survey and what was the result? Fifty-three percent, “Yes” to divorce; 32 percent, “No” to divorce; 15 percent, “Undecided.” So, the majority of those

polled by SWS said that they are in favor of instituting absolute divorce and dissolution of marriage in the Philippines. Nonetheless, we still respect the opposite view of the distinguished Gentleman and we do not demean him for taking such a dissenting view.

REP. DEL MAR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. I really believe that one of us has to make a decision, and the survey noted by the distinguished Sponsor is only applicable as of the date of the survey. There is a continuing survey that will be made and the survey results, when translated into voting before this Chamber and in the Senate, will ultimately decide the issue, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

So, let me go to the Declaration of Policy unless he wants to comment because the distinguished Sponsor and I have been friends for a long time here—years. We have agreed on many issues and we have also disagreed on a couple of issues. Despite our disagreements, our friendship continues and that is why we understand each other and we discuss things on a higher level according to the dictates of the code of conduct here in the Chamber and according to our personal sentiments and opinions.

REP. LAGMAN. I say “Amen” to such declaration or statement of the distinguished Representative from Cebu.

REP. DEL MAR. Thank you very much, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. I note that Section 2, Declaration of Policy, is a contradiction in terms. It opens with “While the State continues to protect and preserve marriage as a social institution and as the foundation of the family, it shall also give opportunity to spouses in irremediably failed marriages to secure an absolute divorce decree x x x”

So, it is either/or—you cannot be “Yes” and “No” on any issue. While the opening lines agree with us that we have to protect and preserve marriage as a social institution and as the foundation of the family, the second line gives opportunity to spouses to secure absolute divorce. So, this is, I think, confusing, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, and I hope that—it does not do anything for me, and I would prefer that we come out with an affirmative position here, not seeing one thing with the left hand and seeing another with the right hand, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Gentleman, a fair and rational reading without any bias of Section 2 on the Declaration of Policy would show that the provisions provided in this Section 2 are compatible and complementary. The State has a dual function, first, to be steadfast in protecting marriage as a social institution and as a foundation of the family. Since marriage is a human institution and despite the

protection of the State, there are marriages which become dysfunctional, shattered beyond repair, so much so that the State should also be duty-bound to give protection to couples in distress. That is why we give them the option, the opportunity to have divorce.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Gentleman from Cebu, in the proceedings for divorce or nullification of marriage, there is actually no more marriage to protect or to destroy because that marriage had long perished and the couples are beyond reconciliation. But for couples in a happy, harmonious and vibrant marital relationships, this Bill is nothing and it is farthest from their thoughts because these happy, harmonious and vibrant couples do not need any divorce, and the State continues to protect their happy, vibrant and harmonious relationships.

REP. DEL MAR. Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that concerned spouses have their option to file for absolute divorce under this measure or seek a legal separation, annulment of marriage or nullification of marriage under the pertinent provisions of the Family Code of the Philippines, which brings me to what we have discussed last night that this Representation believes that we do not need this measure. It is not necessary because for those marriages that are really broken and beyond repair, there are other measures available: annulment of marriage or legal separation. So, this is utterly unnecessary, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, because what will this give to couples who avail of this?

I know that, between this divorce and legal separation, the difference is obvious while the grounds may be the same because the grounds for absolute divorce were taken, among others, from the grounds for legal separation. The main difference there is that spouses who obtain the decree under the absolute divorce measure will be free to remarry; whereas under legal separation, they cannot remarry. I think that is the main basis, Your Honor.

So, if the objective really is to just give the couples the opportunity to get a decree of absolute divorce to be able to remarry, this is not necessary because there is annulment. Unlike legal separation, the marriage ties are not broken or severed, but in the annulment or nullity of marriage, they can remarry. Is that not correct, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LAGMAN. As admitted by the distinguished Gentleman, we had discussed his concern yesterday, and I had repeatedly answered that concern. I have no further addition to what I had already said that this absolute divorce law will give options to the spouses, as the present Family Code on annulment of marriage, legal separation and nullification of marriage does not give full relief to couples in distress.

Particularly with respect to annulment, it refers only to circumstances which fixed the marriage at the time it was solemnized. It does not cover supervening causes which are detrimental to a harmonious relationship between the couples or which have really paralyzed the marital relationship to being a dysfunctional relation beyond repair. But all of these, I had already said yesterday.

REP. DEL MAR. On the options, Mr. Speaker, the distinguished Sponsor stated that the spouses have the option of an absolute divorce under this measure or an annulment or nullification of marriage under the Family Code. That is not entirely accurate, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, because I see here that annulment and legal separation are different. There are two options, but the decree of absolute divorce here overlaps and that controls already. You need not have legal separation anymore, you need not have annulment anymore because it is already provided in the course of action that is allowed under an absolute divorce. So, it is just divorce and legal separation which will remain. But even for the other grounds here, if you obtained a legal separation, after two years, you may use that as a ground for absolute divorce. Is it not correct, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, Your Honor, and I answered these questions already yesterday.

REP. DEL MAR. Maybe the question is similar but was not really treated 100 percent the same as the previous questions. So, in any case, let me continue with the other misleading lines in the Declaration of Policy: “to terminate a continuing dysfunction of a long broken marriage; save the children from the pain, stress, and agony consequent to their parents’ constant marital clashes.” These lines give a very good picture, a rosy picture of happiness, of joy; there is no more pain, no more ache, no more stress, no more agony once the absolute divorce is given; and so, the spouses and the children will be very happy to receive this action from the decree that was given as it is all happiness, no more pain. Do you not realize, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, that the agony, the stress, the pain of the children may even be greater after the parents get a divorce?

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, this Bill is not a panacea to all problems confronting couples in distress as well as children in distress. We never said that this is a Bill which assures ultimate happiness for everybody. The distinguished Gentleman is entitled to his own opinion in his reading of the Bill.

With respect to children, the American Psychological Association, in its article, entitled: “An Overview of

the Psychological Literature on the Effects of Divorce on Children” concludes, may I quote: “The long term consequence for most children of divorce is resiliency rather than dysfunction.” The research indicated that marital conflict, rather than divorce or post-divorce conflict, is a more important predictor of child adjustment. In Canada where a similar study was made, the conclusion empirically derived consisted of the following: 1) the children of divorced parents become more resilient and adaptable; 2) they grow more self-sufficient; 3) they develop an increased sense of empathy towards others; 4) they do not take their own marriages for granted; and 5) they got to know both their parents better because of more quality time spent together, albeit separately. So, these are empirical studies which would show how children of divorced parents are better off than children who are exposed to constant strife between their parents.

REP. DEL MAR. Again, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, the conditions in our country are different from the conditions in other countries. We should not compare oranges and bananas and grapes; they are not the same. The conditions and the culture are entirely different, Your Honor.

Let me just point out that this is a personal opinion, and not based on empirical data. I believe, Your Honor, that once this divorce law is passed, there will be an opening of the floodgates where couples who got married and after the honeymoon are subjected to some differences, which are naturally there because adjustments have to be made when you have a partner already—you used to make decisions without consulting a partner. So, in a business sense, when we are single, we operate a single proprietorship and we decide by ourselves—nobody else. But when you are married, you have a partner and you have to consult each other. That is why these quarrels and differences are normal after the honeymoon is over, but majority of these are settled and the couple goes back to normalcy. If we have this divorce law, there will be less patience, less efforts will be exerted by the couple to work out their differences. Then, there will be a sudden decision to divorce, with the couple not giving the marriage a “go” and trying to solve the problems. There will be a majority of the couples who otherwise would not divorce but will be divorced because of this law.

So, if you are complaining about annulment because it takes too long, it is not an accident that it takes too long as this is intended to give the concerned couples more time to cool off and try to solve their problems so that they do not even have to pursue legal separation or annulment. But once this divorce law is there, and I am aware of the quickie divorce that will be available, the spouses will be readily encouraged to run to get a divorce decree rather than try to cool

down and work things out between each other as has been the case.

In other words, in my opinion why do you have to fix something that is not broken? Everything is okay. Would you like the situation to really be bad? As you assure only very good results or effects from the divorce law, you must also open your eyes that there would be more harm than good by legislating divorce.

REP. LAGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I had practically answered all those concerns yesterday and today, but let me just underscore four things: Number one, generally a child is the same whatever is the culture or environment in which he lives. Number two, empirical data show that the institution of divorce in other countries did not open the floodgates to separation and divorce. Number three, this Bill does not authorize quickie divorces. As a matter of fact, under the Bill, a decree of divorce cannot be based on a stipulation of facts or a confession of judgment. We should not be myopic to the fact that, because marriage is a human institution, some marriages fail and break without any avenue for reconciliation and repair. But this is more the exception rather than the rule and this is where the divorce decree is available.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEL MAR. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor ...

REP. ATIENZA. With the kind permission of the Gentleman on the floor, we would like to participate in the discussion, especially Congressman Del Mar who has been defending the family and marriage. We would like to ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. ... take advantage of the reopening of this interpellation.

REP. LAGMAN. It is Congressman Del Mar and this Representation who have the floor.

REP. ATIENZA. Yes. That is the reason we are asking the permission of the Gentleman and not the one defending this measure.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEL MAR. Of course, insofar as this Representation is concerned, we would be willing to let the Gentleman from Manila interpellate, but that does not mean that I am finished with my interpellation. I can give way to him in view of some questions. Perhaps, he would like to interject in the discussions but let it not be

said, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor and Majority Leader, that I am terminating my interpellation.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. The Honorable Del Mar may yield the floor to the Honorable Atienza. However, if he resumes his interpellation, he can only be given four minutes because he is about to consume the one hour that is allotted to every Member for debate.

With that, Mr. Speaker, may we recognize the Honorable Atienza for additional interpellation, with the reservation that the Honorable Del Mar may continue with his interpellation but the period that can be granted him for the additional interpellation will only be four minutes, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). That is the situation, Honorable Del Mar, if you want to yield.

REP. DEL MAR. How long do I still have, the time to interpellate, Mr. Speaker?

REP. DEFENSOR. Well, at this point, Mr. Speaker, the Honorable Del Mar has three minutes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEL MAR. Okay. In that case, I cannot get an extension anymore.

REP. DEFENSOR. Yes, Mr. Speaker, because under the rules, ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). That would consume your one hour.

REP. DEL MAR. I would love to—I have so many things to bring up, but, like anybody, we have to submit to the rules of the House. If the Gentleman, Honorable Atienza, would like to be accommodated, then I suggest that he wait for a while because, in just six minutes, he will then be recognized by the Speaker and the Majority Leader. Will that be all right, Mr. Speaker?

REP. DEFENSOR. Yes, Mr. Speaker. The Gentleman has three minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). You may continue for three minutes, the Honorable Del Mar.

REP. DEL MAR. Okay. It is stated here that there are limited grounds for this absolute divorce. Going

over the grounds, I can see that there are so many, and these are not, in any way, limited. The grounds stated here for absolute divorce are all the grounds for legal separation, plus all the legal grounds for annulment put together, plus additional grounds of, four grounds, so you have what, 21 grounds, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. I would love to go over each and every ground to dispute the Representation's statement that it is limited only to certain grounds. From the way I look at it, anything and everything can be a ground for absolute divorce.

On the second point—maybe before you answer, distinguished Sponsor, I will consume my five minutes first. On the second point, I would like to bring up that there is virtually no definition, an adequate definition on the terms taken as specific grounds. On other issues, psychological incapacity, irreconcilable differences—that is what I meant in my pointing out that these terms are not well-defined and can be subjected relatively to occasions that may be true to one but might not be true to the other. So, it will depend on the judge, and you are giving so much power to the judge to decide not only whether the grounds for divorce have enough basis, but also other things, the effects such as property settlements, the sharing for the alimony ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). Honorable Del Mar, your time is up.

REP. DEL MAR. ... for the children—they are all decided by the appropriate judge who is given all the powers and authority.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). May I remind the Gentleman that his one hour has expired.

REP. DEL MAR. Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your patience. I wish I had more time because I have so many substantial points yet to present, but thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you also, Dep. Majority Leader and distinguished Sponsor, for giving me the opportunity to ask my questions.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SALO. Next to interpellate, Mr. Speaker, is Hon. Jose "Lito" L. Atienza, Jr. of BUHAY Party-List, additional interpellation, the continuation of yesterday's interpellation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Honorable Lito Atienza is recognized to interpellate the Sponsor.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. I have no hesitancy in debating with the distinguished Gentleman but based on the record, he has been given this opportunity and he has already terminated his period of interpellation.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, am I to understand that the Gentleman is refusing to answer my question?

REP. LAGMAN. No, I am not ...

REP. ATIENZA. I have not consumed one hour.

REP. LAGMAN. I have premised my statement by saying that I have no hesitancy ...

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you.

REP. LAGMAN. ... in accepting the interpellation ...

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you.

REP. LAGMAN. ... of the distinguished Gentleman.

REP. ATIENZA. Salamat po.

REP. LAGMAN. He should disabuse his mind from saying otherwise, just like yesterday when he said that we were lying, we were saying untruths, et cetera, which were definitely unparliamentary.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, that is the reason I stood up. The Gentleman is having his cake and eating it too. He is asking the questions and he is answering them. Let me ask the questions and let him answer them.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Majority Leader, thank you for the opportunity.

Isa lamang po naman ang itatanong ko sa kanya. Tinatanggap po ba ninyo na the word "inviolable" appears in the Constitution?

REP. LAGMAN. Yes, it does. It also appears in another Constitution in Latin America.

REP. ATIENZA. Well, we do not care about the Constitution of Colombia, the center of drug distribution. We do not care about the Constitution of any other South American countries where drugs proliferate and so, families are broken. We are talking about the Philippine Constitution.

Alam po ninyo, na-check ko lahat ng diksyonaryo, thesaurus at tiningnan ko po—ano ba ang ibig sabihin ng inviolable? Isa lang po, ang sabi po o ang ibig sabihin niyan, it cannot be broken, it cannot be interrupted, it cannot be interchanged. Iyan po ang wording ng ating Saligang Batas.

Pangalawa, ano po ba ang mga kapareho o synonym ng word na ito? Ang sabi po ng mga libro at ating

tinanong ang may kaalaman, ang sagot ay simple, unassailable, sacred, hallowed, cannot even be touched. Iyon po ang ibig sabihin ng “inviolable.” Kaya tinanong ko po sila kung nandoon po ba sa ating Saligang Batas iyon? Ang sagot po nila ay nandoon. Kung nandoon po, lahat itong kanilang mga ipiniprisinta sa atin ngayon ay violations of the Constitution, and I reiterate my position. I will not question him on the provisions of a proposed law that are violations of our Constitution.

Thank you.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you for that—not asking any question.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. This Bill is definitely constitutional and we will face anyone in any forum to defend the constitutionality of this measure.

REP. ATIENZA. We will also face him, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, there being no other colleagues who wish to interpellate or speak against the measure, I move to close the period of sponsorship and debate on this particular measure. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 7303

REP. BONDOC. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of this particular measure. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

RATIFICATION OF CONF. COMM. RPT. ON H.B. NO. 6573 AND S.B. NO. 1662

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, we are in receipt of the bicameral Conference Committee Report reconciling the disagreeing provisions of House Bill

No. 6573 and Senate Bill No. 1662 which prohibit hazing and other initiational rites of fraternities and sororities.

May I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the titles of the measures.

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

The Secretary General is directed to read only the titles of the measures.

With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the Conference Committee Report have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the titles of the measures without prejudice to inserting the text of the report in the Congressional Record.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 6573, 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 ENTITLED “AN ACT REGULATING HAZING AND OTHER FORMS OF INITIATION RITES IN FRATERNITIES, SORORITIES, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR”; and Senate Bill No. 1662, entitled: AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8049 TO STRENGTHEN THE LAW ON HAZING AND REGULATE OTHER FORMS OF INITIATION RITES OF FRATERNITIES, SORORITIES, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we ratify the said bicameral Conference Committee Report.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). As many as are in favor of approving the bicameral Conference Committee Report, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). As many as are against, please say *nay*. (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The bicameral Conference Committee Report on House Bill No. 6573 and Senate Bill No. 1662 is approved.

RECONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL
OF H.B. NO. 7230 ON SECOND READING

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, on March 7, 2018, we approved on Second Reading, House Bill No. 7230. With leave of the House, I move that we reconsider the approval on Second Reading of House Bill 7230 for some perfecting amendments.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we amend Section 1, page 1, line 9 of House Bill No. 7230 by deleting the words (Mayor Gemiliano “Mel”) and replacing it with the word MEL.

I so move, Mr. Speaker

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, there being no more Committee amendments and no individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we vote on House Bill No. 7230, as amended, on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). As many as are in favor, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). As many as are against, please say *nay*.

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 7230, AS AMENDED,
ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The *ayes* have it; the motion is approved.

House Bill No. 7230, as amended, is approved on Second Reading.

RECOMMITMENT OF H.B. NO. 7296
TO THE CTEE. ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL
INTERMEDIARIES

REP. DEFENSOR. As requested Mr. Speaker, by the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries through its Chairperson Rep. Ben Evardone, I move that we recommit House Bill No. 7296, under Committee Report No. 637, to the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we include the additional coauthors of House Bill Nos. 7260, 7303, 7309, 7376 and 7378; and House Resolution No. 1767, as contained in the lists to be submitted by the Committee on Rules.

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

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, March 14, 2018, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Singson). The session is adjourned until tomorrow, March 14, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

It was 7:02 p.m.