



# Congressional Record

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*At 1:00 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Raneo “Ranie” E. Abu presiding.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GARCIA (J.). I move to suspend the session, Mr. Speaker.

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

*It was 1:00 p.m.*

### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 1:06 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

### CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8169

*Continuation*

### PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 8169 and direct the Secretary General to read only the title of the Bill.

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

The Secretary General is hereby directed to read only the title of House Bill No. 8169 for consideration on Second Reading.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 8169, entitled: AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FROM JANUARY ONE TO DECEMBER THIRTY-ONE, TWO THOUSAND AND NINETEEN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary status of the Bill is that it is in the period of sponsorship and debate. I move that Rep. Alfred D. Vargas be recognized to sponsor the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The distinguished Sponsor is recognized.

Majority Leader, may I know what office budget are we going to discuss here?

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, this is the budget of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission.

### PASIG RIVER REHABILITATION COMMISSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The distinguished Sponsor of the budget of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, the Hon. Alfred Vargas is recognized.

REP. VARGAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Representation has the honor of presenting the budget of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission for the year 2019 in the amount of P328,108,000. This Representation is now ready to answer questions from my colleagues.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, Rep. Jose “Lito” L. Atienza for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from BUHAY Party-List, the Hon. Lito Atienza is recognized to interpellate the good Sponsor.

REP. ATIENZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Majority Leader. With the kind indulgence of the Sponsor, we would like to clarify certain issues about the agency.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. How much is the total budget, Mr. Speaker, being requested by the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, the amount that was requested by the PRRC is around P5.5 billion and as per NEP, the PRRC budget for 2019 only has P328 million, which is only 5.9 percent of their proposed budget.

REP. ATIENZA. So, they are not getting what they have asked for, is that the picture?

REP. VARGAS. Definitely, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Ano po ba ang main function ng Pasig River Commission?

REP. VARGAS. Well, basically, it is to maintain the cleanliness, in general, of the Pasig River and its tributaries.

REP. ATIENZA. To maintain the cleanliness of the Pasig River, the water thereat, is that right?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, in support of urban development.

REP. ATIENZA. For the information of the Body, the Pasig River is the main contributor to the problem of Manila Bay. Hindi po natin puwedeng pag-usapan ang Pasig River without stressing the fact that it flows out into Manila Bay. Alam po ba ng ating namumuno ngayon sa Pasig River Commission na lumala nang lumala ang problema sa quality of water ng ating Manila Bay at iyan ay patuloy na nagmimistulang poso negro, pati ang amoy ay poso negro na rin. Alam po ba ng Pasig River Commission iyon?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. If they know and accept the fact that they are part of the solution, can I get a brief answer on the clearing and cleaning of the estero waters that flow into the Pasig River which in turn flow out into

Manila Bay? Kung maaalala po natin iyong dating Pasig River Commission, sa pamumuno ni Gng. Gina Lopez, na ang inyong lingkod ang nag-appoint, ay mayroon siyang mga proyektong paglilinis sa ating mga estero upang malinis na tubig galing dito ang dadaloy sa Pasig River. Naglaan kami ng milyun-milyong salapi para dito kaya ano po ba ang nangyari doon sa pagsisikap na iyon? Natuloy ba iyon? Ginawa ba iyon?

REP. VARGAS. Yes po.

REP. ATIENZA. Sapagkat nagbitiw na po tayo sa ating tanggapan, and to my disappointment, that project seems to have been stalled and forgotten. I would like to ask where the money went? Ginastos po ba iyon o naibili po ba ng mga equipment iyon? Mayroon po bang nagawa na tulong ang programang iyon sapagkat si Ms. Lopez, nag-graduate at naging Sekretarya ng DENR, kaya dapat ay lalo pang lumakas iyong proyekto ng paglilinis ng tubig na galing sa estero.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. You cannot imagine the kind of water that flows out of the San Juan River, that flows into the Pasig River. Putik na halos iyon. Galing po iyon sa mga toilet. Iyon ang uri ng tubig, na doon sa proyekto ay lilinisin bago dumaloy sa Pasig River para po naman makatulong sa paglilinis ng tubig sa Manila Bay. So, can we get a short, brief description of what happened to that project which we approved but seemingly did not materialize? Was the budget used or was it returned to the Treasury?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, patuloy po iyong paglilinis sa Pasig River, constantly, and as a matter of fact, this includes the handling of the informal settler families living therein in trying to improve the water quality of the Pasig River. Mayroon din po tayong partnership from 2018 up to 2022 with both Manila Water and Maynilad. The two concessionaires will install interceptor canals along the easement to capture waste water from the households that you are mentioning, so that there will be no more direct discharge of domestic waste water into the esteros po.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, I hate to disagree with the Sponsor pero hindi po totoo lahat iyong sinasabi niya dahil iyan po ay nasa libro pero hindi ginagawa. As of now, the river still is a receptacle of domestic waste water coming from the esteros in Manila, Pasay, San Juan and all the rest of the cities in Metro Manila. What I want is a direct answer—ano ang nangyari roon sa aming project to clean up the esteros? Dahil hanggang ngayon, ang mga estero ay punung-puno ng basura, pagkatapos ay gusto ninyo na maniwala kami na

mayroong programang pinagsisikapan ngayon? I think we are getting a lot of fantasy and made-up ideas from the PRRC now which are not part of the reality at all. Sa mga esteros ngayon, puwede na kayong lumakad sa ibabaw dahil punung-puno ng basura ang mga ito. What program are you talking about?

REP. VARGAS. Currently, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, there are efforts in 15 out of the 47 esteros and, Mr. Speaker, I understand the good Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List what he meant when he said it is not improving, that is, in terms of biochemical oxygen demand. Medyo ano po tayo roon, medyo mababa pa rin po and also, for the dissolved oxygen. However, there are also improvement in terms of temperature, pH balance, and total volume of suspended solids, nitrate, oil and grease, and fecal coliform. So, it is a mixed bag, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, but I am glad to report that there had been improvements in that light. The PRRC is really committed to addressing the concerns that you have raised, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, we would like to ask the Sponsor for specifics. Anong estero ang masasabi ninyo ngayon na nalinis na ninyo at pupuntahan ko po first hour tomorrow morning. I will check it out and I will report to this Body kung ano ang makikita ko.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor. That would be Estero San Miguel, ...

REP. ATIENZA. Estero San Miguel?

REP. VARGAS. ... Estero de Concordia ...

REP. ATIENZA. Iyong sa may Malacañang? Again, you are lying, Mr. Speaker. The Sponsor is not telling the truth. I pass by that street everyday and I do not see any work being done in that estero. How dare you report to me now that you have improved the water quality of Estero de San Miguel? I take offense on the allegation, Mr. Speaker, as the Sponsor does not seem to know what he is putting on record in this dialogue that we are having. Ano pa ho?

REP. VARGAS. That is not the intent of this Representation, Mr. Speaker. We are only basing our answers on the data that we have here.

REP. ATIENZA. We are asking for names of esteros that we can account and we can audit so that we would be able to say whether the PRRC is working or not. Now, whatever reasons they have—walang pondo, kulang sa pondo—sila ang bahalang sumagot pero hindi po natin puwedeng tanggapin na mayroon na po silang mga solusyon sa problema kung wala.

REP. VARGAS. These are the esteros, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor: Estero de San Miguel, Estero de Concordia, Estero de Sampaloc, Estero de Valencia, and Pasong Tamo Creek.

REP. ATIENZA. Puwede po bang makakuha kami ng kopya ng report na iyan, kung saan man nanggaling iyan para mayroon po tayong pag-uusapan pagkatapos nito.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, definitely, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. We would be glad to furnish you the data on the said esteros.

REP. ATIENZA. Together with that, we would like to request the Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, that we also be given or be furnished a report on what I asked for initially.

REP. VARGAS. Yes.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyong estero clearing and cleaning as initiated by former Chairman Gina Lopez which received quite a sum of money from the government, the national government at that, during my time.

REP. VARGAS. Yes.

REP. ATIENZA. We should be able to say, “this is what was spent, dito nagpunta iyan, bumili kami ng equipment diyan,”—I would like to get a copy of that report.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, the PRRC will be glad to give you a copy, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Again, shifting to another subject, on the matter of maintaining the Pasig River. During President Arroyo’s time, I remember very clearly that she had a very aggressive program to dredge the Pasig River and the Laguna de Bay, which program we tried implementing. We succeeded in dredging the Pasig River, but we failed to implement the hard work of dredging Laguna de Bay simply because the succeeding government, led by President Aquino, described that project as nothing but nonsense. Would you agree with the position of the former President that the dredging of Laguna de Bay is nonsense?

REP. VARGAS. No, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. We are happy to hear that because akala ko pare-pareho na ang tingin ninyo, na nonsense iyong linisin ang Laguna de Bay. Ang tubig ng Laguna de Bay ay bumabaho na rin. Iyong isda diyan ay may lason na rin. We were able to dredge Pasig River with

the best technology available in the world, again, thanks to the leadership of the former President who is here with us now. She will be my star witness in what I am trying to put on record today.

Pasig River was, once upon a time, dredged heavily and we succeeded in doing that. So, from that time, which is 2008, ano na po ba ang nagawa ng present leadership ng Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission when it comes to dredging and preventing the continuous deterioration and degradation of the Pasig River waters? Mayroon po ba silang pagsisikap?

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, as far as dredging is concerned, the PRRC is planning to have 2.8 million cubic meters dredged.

REP. ATIENZA. Did I hear, Mr. Speaker, that they are planning? Planning?

REP. VARGAS. They have proposed it already and ...

REP. ATIENZA. Sa ngayon ay punung-puno po ng siltation and materials, again, underneath the Pasig River.

REP. VARGAS. The budget had been requested already, Mr. Speaker, and the project is for implementation as soon as the budget is released.

REP. ATIENZA. Is the leadership, Mr. Speaker, working on any special budget coming from, probably, the Office of the President, or a special fund that will clean and clear and dredge again Pasig River today?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor. Mayroon na pong ine-expect po.

REP. ATIENZA. Ano po ito, Mr. Speaker, and how much are they requesting for?

REP. VARGAS. The PRRC is asking a budget for dredging for implementation this year.

REP. ATIENZA. We would like to put on record that the dredging required by the Pasig River today and Laguna de Bay is not the ordinary dredging as what the former President had put on record.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, you are correct, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyan daw ay pangkaraniwang dredging lang. Kung hindi ba naman talagang graft and corruption-ridden ang proyektong ito, ang mura-mura daw ng dredging. Sabi niya, doon sa Tarlac, dinadampot

lang ang putik sa ilog at inilalagay sa tabi. He did not even know what he was talking about. Dredging a wide river like the Pasig River and dredging bodies of water like the Laguna de Bay cannot be done in that manner.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, that is correct.

REP. ATIENZA. You need modern technology that would really go down deep in the underbelly of the water body and bring out the materials, not to put them on the side, but to bring them out somewhere. During the dredging of the Pasig River during the time of President Arroyo, we had to bring the waste out into the open sea, almost near China Sea, and bury the materials that we picked out from the underbelly of the Pasig River.

REP. VARGAS. Yes po.

REP. ATIENZA. Kaya iyong Pasig River po, after about 40 years, ay nabuhay at dumaloy muli at tumakbo nang mabilis ang tubig sapagkat ginawang tama ang dredging. Ano po ba ang dredging na gagawin ninyo at hinihingi ng ating kasalukuyang liderato? When you say dredging, do they appreciate the different kinds of dredging, or are they thinking iyong sinasabi po ng dating Pangulo?

REP. VARGAS. Yes po, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, iyong ganoong klaseng dredging po that is enough to address what you are talking about in terms of the Pasig River system. It is no joke—dredging the Pasig River, as you pointed out earlier, is really no joke and it requires really heavy equipment and advanced technology to be able to address this, kasi grabe na po talaga ang nangyayari po dito at bumababaw po ang tubig ng Pasig River.

REP. ATIENZA. We would like to hear the voice of the Chairman now of the PRRC. We would like to hear this particular office make noise. Get the President to notice that we now have to clean and clear Laguna de Bay, Pasig River and Manila Bay as they are all interconnected. Iyan pong bahaging iyan ng ating katubigan ang pinakamahalaga at pinaka-importante at maaaring magbigay ng yaman sa Pilipino.

REP. VARGAS. Yes.

REP. ATIENZA. Kapag iyan ay nalinis natin ay magkakaroon muli ng gamit ang Pasig River na noong araw ay maaari kaming mangisda. Noong araw ay nakapagswi-swimming kami sa Pasig River, but do not attempt to do that now as you will never get out of it alive dahil sa kapabayaang. Magmula noong 2008, and that was 10 years ago, wala na po kaming nabalitaan

mula sa Pasig River Commission kaya nag-aalala po ang inyong lingkod.

REP. VARGAS. Opo.

REP. ATIENZA. Mukhang tanggapan na lang ito at hindi po opisina na nagtatrabaho. Tanggapan? Tanggapan ng marami pero walang nagtatrabaho dahil, sa tingin ko, ang Pasig River Commission ay walang kakibo-kibo. Kapag walang kibo ay baka may ibang ginagawa o hindi po naman.

REP. VARGAS. Hindi po. Definitely, ang administrasyon po na ito ng PRRC ay marami pong ginagawa. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I am glad to present that because in this administration headed by Director Jose Antonio “Pepeton” E. Goitia, we have this 15-year plan po, Your Honor, called the PRISM or the Pasig River Integrated Strategic Master Plan, which is basically a comprehensive and holistic rehabilitation plan to improve the current state of the Pasig River to make it a viable means of transport, recreation and for tourism. The physical and policy development were also established in the master plan like the construction of water treatment plants, eco-park, linear park, laboratory and dredging activities, et cetera. So, ito pong PRISM, this 15-year plan, sa tingin ko po, kung mapondohan po sana, dahil ngayon po dito sa NEP, they only got 5 percent of the request, but hopefully, in the years to come, sana po ay mapondohan at mabigyan po ng priority itong Pasig River. Mr. Speaker, we share this same sentiment, Your Honor. Medyo maliit po talaga iyong ating budget dito.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker, malapit na akong maiyak sa ikinukuwento at isinasalaysay nitong ating Sponsor sapagkat iyong sinasabi niya ay panaginip na hindi matutupad sa takbo ng kanilang pagtatrabaho. Mayroon ba kaming nabalitaan, mayroon ba kaming narinig, mayroon ba kaming natanggap na liham o impormasyon tungkol sa maltreatment na tinatanggap nila? Humihingi sila ng P5 billion ngunit binigyan sila ng P300 million—wala tayong narinig. Ngayon, nakakarinig tayo ng fairy tale—iyan po ay pambata. Hindi po maaaring tanggapin sa Kongreso iyan.

Sa ngayon, ang hinihingi natin sa kanila ay gumawa sila ng paraan at mag-ingay sila, manawagan sila sa Pangulo. Kung mawalan kayo ng trabaho sa paglilingkod—ang paglilingkod, isang karangalan po iyon. Pero iyong tumatahimik kayo, ano ang ginagawa ninyo? Wala! Dahil sabi nga ninyo, wala kayong pera at wala po naman talagang suporta sa national government, but unless you make noise, the whole nation will just put the blame on you.

Alam ba ninyo na ang Pasig River ngayon is classified as eighth in the top 20 most polluted rivers

in the world, sa buong mundo. Pang-walo sa 20 na pinakabulok, mabaho at polluted na ilog sa buong mundo—iyan ay according to the studies of Greenpeace Philippines, na pinaniniwalaan ko po sapagkat dumadaan naman tayo sa Pasig River. Iyong anak kong si Kim, nag-dive diyan, pinagalitan ko—kilala ba ninyo si Kuya Kim?

REP. VARGAS. Definitely po.

REP. ATIENZA. Nag-dive doon at nag-swimming pero pinagalitan ko. Sabi ko, “Mabuti lumabas ka pa dahil putik na iyong ilalim niyan.” Sabi niya, “Oo Dad, nakapa ko, talagang putik na lahat, akala ko hindi na ako lalabas.” Ganoon po ang kondisyon niyan, hindi na po ilog iyan sa ngayon. Kailangang panumbalik natin ang pagiging ilog sa isang paraang tama.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Hindi po nila magagawa iyan kung suweldo na lang ang iisipin nila at sila ay mananahimik na walang naririnig ang ating bayan. Marahil hindi rin naririnig ng Pangulong Duterte ang problema ninyo. We believe that you should report very clearly and accurately to the Department of Environment and issue a memorandum to the President and remind him how vital Pasig River is to the nation’s future. Kapag ang ilog na iyan ay pinabayaan natin ay hindi uunlad ang Pilipinas kailanman. Kapag nilinis ninyo iyan at ang Laguna de Bay, at malinis na din ang Manila Bay, ay uunlad na ang Pilipinas.

Sa ngayon, kung ang trabaho nila ay para bagang sine, walang sound at no talkies, ay walang mangyayari sa kanila. Baka ang pinoproblema nila ay iyong suweldo nila, baka sila ay matanggal sa trabaho kung mag-iingay sila—kaawa-awa po naman tayong lahat. They need to act, and we will react. The whole nation will join them. If they keep quiet, nobody would know the problem. Iyong ibinigay sa atin ng kalikasan at ng Panginoon ay hindi natin napakikinabangan.

Ang Manila Bay at Pasig River ay connecting to Laguna de Bay. Iyan po ang pinakamahalagang katubigan na ibinigay sa atin ng Panginoon. Kung pababayan ninyo na mapuno ng putik iyan, baka ngayon mayroon na namang mga sasakyan diyan o mayroon talagang mga basurang tumagal na ng dekada, sapagkat isang dekada na magmula noong na-dredge iyan, ay talagang hindi natin malilinis iyan.

Please, Mr. Speaker, for the record, lahat iyong sinabi nila, this Representation is not accepting. I will be waiting for the report on the estero clearing and cleaning that should help you clean up Pasig River, which was implemented sometime in 2008. We did not hear anything anymore about what happened to the money and of any performance report that was done after that

project was approved, which supposedly contributed greatly to the cleaning up of the water.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Yes, the PRRC would be glad to furnish you with copies of its financial reports, its project analysis reports, everything.

REP. ATIENZA. And join us us in our continuing effort ...

REP. VARGAS. ... yes, we will join you and the rest of this Body.

REP. ATIENZA. ... to force the two water concessioners, the Maynilad and Manila Waters na i-deliver nila iyong basic requirement in their contract with the government.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor, that is exactly the direction the PRRC is taking now and the PRRC also echoes your concerns. Actually, the Director has already expressed these concerns to Malacañang and hopefully, an immediate action on this will be expected.

REP. ATIENZA. Can we get, again, what the Gentleman Sponsor is claiming as to the actions taken or being taken.? Can we get a copy of this position of yours in forcing the two water concessioners to deliver that very important commitment?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, within this day, Your Honor. The PRRC will furnish you with a copy hopefully within the day, but at the latest, by tomorrow morning.

REP. ATIENZA. Singil sila ng singil sa mga tao at lahat po tayo ay nagbabayad sa dalawang concessioners na iyan buwan-buwan. Kumokolekta po sila supposedly for the provision of waste water treatment facilities, kaya dapat lahat ng tubig galing sa ating mga toilet ay pupunta sa isang waste water cleaning facility para iyong tubig na dadaloy sa estero ay malinis at malinaw. Iyong tubig mula sa estero na dadaloy sa Pasig River ay malinis at malinaw. Kapag hindi po ginawa ng Maynilad at ng Manila Water ang commitment na iyon ay hindi kayo magtatagumpay sa paglilinis ng Pasig River.

REP. VARGAS. We agree. This Representation agrees with you, Your Honor, that these two concessionaires should contribute to making the Pasig River the river it once was.

REP. ATIENZA. So, we would expect, Mr. Speaker, one, a report on the estero cleaning project that we initiated in 2008.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Two, we will expect the listing of the esteros that they claimed have benefited already from their cleaning efforts.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Three, their position on the waste water treatment plants that we are demanding from the Maynilad and Manila Water.

REP. VARGAS. Yes.

REP. ATIENZA. Kung wala ang mga plantang iyon ay ninanakawan po ang taumbayan because every month, we pay for the cleaning of the estero in our water bill. Paki-check ninyo iyong water bill ninyo. Tanungin ninyo sa ating mga maybahay kung magkano ang ibinabayad nila. A 20 percent of the water bill is added. It is identified as environment fee and that is supposed to go to the waste water treatment facility. Ipinangutang na po iyan sa mga foreign banks in millions of dollars with sovereign guarantees. Ang nagbabayad po ng utang ay tayo. Nakalista po iyan sa mga binabayaran ngayon ng national government, itong mga foreign loans. Again, ginastos ba iyan sa waste water treatment facility? Ewan ko kung saan ginastos iyong mga perang inutang nila sa mga bangko. Ang may utang diyan ay ang bansang Pilipinas.

Idinemanda namin ang dalawang kumpanyang iyan at sinisingil namin ng fine of P100,000 per company, P200,000 a day for not delivering the waste water treatment facility and since when was that? Since 1997, when they got the concessions 21 years ago and so, they should have delivered it. For 21 years, they have been collecting billions, probably hundreds of billions of pesos from the Filipino consumer but where is the waste water treatment facility? Alam kaya ng Chairman ng PRRC iyong itinatanong ko? Mayroon na po bang waste water treatment facility ang Pasig River o Metro Manila that should have been provided by the two water concessionaires?

REP. VARGAS. Mayroon na po, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Do they understand what we are addressing here?

REP. VARGAS. Yes. The magnitude of the problem is clearly understood, Your Honor.

REP. ATIENZA. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we will expect more action from them as we would be monitoring their existence. If they are useful, we will support them.

REP. VARGAS. Thank you.

REP. ATIENZA. If they are not in any way effective, we will move for their abolition because it is a waste of money. We spent P300 million for a non-performing office.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we end our interpellation and we hope for the delivery of the answers to our questions, as we will be anxiously expecting them so that we can review where we are now with regard to their functions.

Thank you.

REP. VARGAS. Thank you, Your Honor. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, before we proceed, may we acknowledge the presence of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission family headed by its Executive Director Jose Antonio Goitia, Deputy Executive Director Jimbo Mallari, and Deputy Executive Director Anshari Lomodag Jr.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Welcome to the House of Representatives, the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission family.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, may we recognize the Gentleman from the Lone District of Catanduanes, the honorable Rep. Cesar V. Sarmiento, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Lone Representative of the province of Catanduanes, the Hon. Cesar Sarmiento, is recognized. Before that, ipinaaabot po naming lahat ang pakikiramay sa pagkamatay ng inyong kapatid kagabi.

You may proceed.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the recognition.

I just have a brief question regarding the role of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission. Could you please educate us on the jurisdiction or the mandate of your agency?

REP. VARGAS. Basically, its jurisdiction covers the whole of Pasig River and its 47 tributaries, Your Honor. Mr. Speaker, and their mandate is the improvement of the water quality and development of its linear parks within the context of better urban development.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). So, it starts and it ends where?

REP. VARGAS. It starts from Napindan near Laguna Lake and ends in Baseco going to Manila Bay.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). Sa bandang Manila Bay?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). So, ito pong area na ito ay exclusive ang jurisdiction ng agency with respect to these tributaries.

REP. VARGAS. Not necessarily because it is always a collective effort with the local government units like, for example, the MMDA has jurisdiction over the ferry system there. So, it is always a collective effort in the management of this river and its river system.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). What kind of relationship do you have with respect to the MMDA vis-a-vis the operation of the ferry system?

REP. VARGAS. It is mainly coordination.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). As everyone knows, we have a problem on traffic and definitely, the use of the Pasig River would play a very crucial role in addressing the problem of traffic by way of mitigation.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, definitely, Your Honor. The Gentleman being also the Chairman of the Transportation Committee, he knows that the Pasig River spans from east to west and so, it is definitely a viable option. Actually, there is already a ferry system—I had been there myself and I had tried to ride the ferry system already, but it needs a lot of improvement. It is already being used by a good number of commuters in Metro Manila.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). Several months ago, we conducted an ocular inspection and tried to use the ferry system. Some of the terminals are not functioning so, since you are also the Sponsor for the budget of the MMDA, may we know if all those port terminals along Pasig River are fully operational?

REP. VARGAS. As far as I know, these are operational but they need improvement, with some needing relocation because of right-of-way problems since we still need to buy the properties which are suitable for terminals. For example, some terminals in Makati, medyo malayo pa po ang mga ito from some intermodal terminals and so, we need to connect the dots

there to be able to have a very fluid flow of commuter traffic.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). Well, a couple of months ago, I read in the newspapers that Secretary Diokno conducted an inspection and thought of the possibility of enhancing and improving the ferry system along the Pasig River. We are very much interested because that would greatly help address the problem of traffic in Metro Manila.

REP. VARGAS. Yes.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). So, may we know the update after the visit made by the DBM Secretary himself? Have there been positive actions taken after the visit of Secretary Diokno?

REP. VARGAS. Definitely, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, and we are talking about the Pasig River Ferry Convergence Program which is an interagency cooperation among, of course, the DBM, MMDA, PRRC and DPWH. With this, hopefully, we would be able to address that concern you are expressing right now.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). So, how far have we gone after the visit of Secretary Diokno. Umuusad ho ba tayo?

REP. VARGAS. Right now, we are still in the feasibility study stage and hopefully, this can be implemented at the soonest time, by next year or two years from now, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). We have to think of many creative ways to address the problem of traffic here in Metro Manila and one way of doing that would be to tap the Pasig River System

REP. VARGAS. Yes, the East to West Pasig River System. I agree with you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, especially with all the urban management problems we are facing, that we really have to be creative and this Pasig River Ferry Convergence Program can be one of those creative solutions that we can do and we would like to partner with you in implementing this, in pursuing this.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). Well, we are very pleased to be informed that there is such a program and we look forward that this project would be implemented at the soonest possible time, considering that traffic is getting terrible. So, we hope that all the agencies involved would really work hard to make this a reality.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, definitely, Your Honor, and the PRRC wishes to thank you for expressing your support and if they can pass by your office to set up a meeting with you and your Committee regarding the positive and creative inputs for this particular project. The PRRC will be glad to meet with you and your Committee, of which I am also a member.

REP. SARMIENTO (C.). So, with that assurance coming from the PRRC— and probably a reminder to the other agencies for the immediate implementation of the project so that people in Metro Manila would have a sigh of relief from the pestering problem of traffic—I end my interpellation.

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

REP. VARGAS. Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Thank you, Rep. Cesar Sarmiento.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, may we recognize Rep. Arnolfo “Arnie” A. Teves Jr. for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Rep. Arnie Teves from Negros Oriental is recognized.

REP. TEVES. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to everybody. Is the honorable Sponsor willing to answer some questions?

REP. VARGAS. Gladly, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TEVES. Matanong ko lang ito—may nagtatapon pa ba ng dumi sa Pasig River? Ang ibig kong sabihin ay discharges or wastes from the factories, iyong mga matagal na diyan?

REP. VARGAS. Mayroon pa po, to answer directly.

REP. TEVES. Anong ginagawa ninyo kasi para sa akin, those are very obvious pollutants. Bakit hindi ito masara-sara or matigil-tigil ng Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission through whatever agency?

REP. VARGAS. Actually, the LLDA has already deputized the PRRC to check and report on this and to take action pero, admittedly, napakahirap po kasi talagang i-manage nito kasi napakarami pong nagtatapon ng dumi rito at nagko-contribute sa pollution. But even with the small and meager budget that we have, the

PRRC is slowly trying to improve this situation, Your Honor.

REP. TEVES. If I may give a simple suggestion, kung mayroon lang talagang lakas ng loob, simple lang iyan. Lahat ng tubo na nagtatapon doon ay sarahan ninyo lang, sementuhan ninyo ang mga iyan para hindi na makakatapon iyan. Magba-back flow sa kanila iyan. If you are really willing to do, it can be done. Kung ako ang nandidiyan, sa isang taon ay tatapusin ko iyan. Puwede ba? Sarahan na lang. All you have to do is sementuhan ninyo, just plug the holes.

REP. VARGAS. This suggestion is noted, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, but the PRRC does not have the power to do that, it is with the DENR and the LLDA. But if the PRRC would be given the authority to do so, bukas na bukas po ay gagawin iyan ng PRRC.

REP. TEVES. Okay. Mayroon naman kayong convergence, hindi ba? Mag-usap-usap kayo. Kung DENR ang may kapasidad na gumawa niyan, ipasara ninyo sa kanila. Magkano lang iyong semento? Isara na ninyo iyong butas at hindi na makakatapon iyan, dahil hindi na nila propriyedad iyan, hindi ba? Kung sinara mo iyong nasa side mo, bahala na sila sa side nila, hindi ba? You are not intruding on their property because you are closing the one na nasa river side na, hindi ba?

REP. VARGAS. The suggestion, Your Honor, will be taken up with the concerned agencies.

REP. TEVES. Sana lang. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VARGAS. Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Thank you, Representative Teves.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, may we recognize our Minority Leader, the Representative of the Third District of Quezon, the Hon. Danilo E. Suarez, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative of the Third District of Quezon, our distinguished Minority Leader is recognized to interpellate the distinguished Sponsor.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the distinguished colleague yield to some questions?

REP. VARGAS. Gladly, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Your Honor, during the time of President GMA, we did a iyong walk-through. Kami ho naman, we took a boat ride from the mouth of the Manila Bay—and like in other cities that we visited, especially in Europe, it is a tourist attraction kasi doon sa boat ride ay makikita mo iyong magagandang structure—pero iyon nakita ho namin is very discouraging. May nakita ho kaming extended na toilet at habang dumadaan kami, mayroon hong tao doon sa toilet na—alam ninyo ho, doon siya, ginagamit po niyang palikuran iyong ilog. Mayroon pa bang mga ganoong structure up to now? Ito ho iyong extension, nilagyan ng mga nakatira sa mga bahay doon ng makeshift stall kung saan ginagawa po nilang kubeta iyong ilog.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor, since 2013, the Commission dismantled 456 structures obstructing the easement and the waterways.

REP. SUAREZ. So, wala na ho ang mga iyon ngayon.

REP. VARGAS. Honestly, Your Honor, mayroon pa rin pong natitira pero tuloy-tuloy po itong ginagawa natin because we have to do this one step at a time.

REP. SUAREZ. What you are doing is, sisirain ninyo pero lalagyan ulit nila.

REP. VARGAS. Pinapatayuan po once ...

REP. SUAREZ. It is continuing kuwan, parang sinasabi ninyo na sinisira nga ninyo iyong mga makeshift toilets pero pagkatapos, may lalabas na naman sa ibang lugar at pagkatapos, aalisin na naman iyon.

REP. VARGAS. Your Honor, once the structure is dismantled, the PRRC automatically converts it to a linear park po, either a 10-meter or a 3-meter linear park.

REP. SUAREZ. I remember, during my college days, distinguished Sponsor, when I was working in the City Hall of Manila and I was with the Department of Public Service, one of my duties was to conduct a survey among different households asking them if they have a toilet. If they do not have a toilet, the city government provides them with the toilet bowl and charges them, I think, P7 a month as amortization for the toilet bowl. So, I am just telling you what the previous administration had done, especially to those living in the riverbanks. May I know the original or do you have the historical data on the real width of the river? Ano po talaga ang lawak, on the average, ng Pasig River?

REP. VARGAS. Your Honor, the length is 27

kilometers and historically, the width is 90 meters, 9-0.

REP. SUAREZ. That is 270 feet. Mukhang walang 270 feet ho ang Pasig River. Do you believe that its width now is still 270 feet?

REP. VARGAS. No, that is the historical width

REP. SUAREZ. Dito ho sa inyo ipinakitang mga brochure, nandito po iyong mga nagba-violate na naglalagay ng pagkarami-raming structure, hindi po ba, at naka-highlight po dito iyong mga sinira na ninyo?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. The total number of privately-owned structures demolished — 182

REP. VARGAS. In 2017, Your Honor, yes.

REP. SUAREZ. Yes. Poroc Industrial, Puregold—ito ho iyong sinasabi ko sa inyo na kapag hindi po ninyo ito nabantayan ay mag-e-encroach ang mga ito sa gilid, palaki ng palaki ang encroachment nila at pagkatapos ay patitituluhan. So, that is precisely one reason kung bakit nagsi-shrink ho ang width ng Pasig River, Your Honor.

REP. VARGAS. Your Honor, the PRRC is doing its best to prevent such things from happening.

REP. SUAREZ. I overheard that the Manila Water and the Maynilad Water Services are mandated or part of their concession agreement is that they will have to treat the waste water, the sewer waste of the National Capital Region along their service area in the Pasig River?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Do you have a provision there that if they will not comply...

REP. VARGAS. That is the Supreme Court mandamus, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. There was a ruling already that they should comply with that provision that the sewer waste will be handled by them, meaning, pagtapon po sa ilog ay treated na iyong dumi?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, this is the Supreme Court mandamus.

REP. SUAREZ. It was not in your report, Your Honor

REP. VARGAS. It is under the MWSS— it is a Supreme Court mandamus where the Manila Bay and ...

REP. SUAREZ. Now, can you just give me a copy of that Supreme Court ruling, Your Honor?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor, the PRRC will furnish you with that specific ruling.

REP. SUAREZ. My Senior Deputy Leader is very familiar with the Manila Pasig River issue and if you will look—I do not know whether it was changed, but what is the average depth now of the river?

REP. VARGAS. The average depth of the river now is 2.5 meters, Your Honor

REP. SUAREZ. So, 2.5 meters, that is 7.2 feet.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, approximately.

REP. SUAREZ. Ganyan na ang lalim ng Pasig River. Ang babaw na, hindi ho ba?

REP. VARGAS. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. Are you aware, distinguished Sponsor—baka hindi ho ninyo naabutan at teenager pa kayo noon—one major reason we dredge the Pasig River is for security reasons?

REP. VARGAS. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. There was a time that there was a commotion in the Palace and the movement of troops cannot be implemented because of several derelict vessels—ang dami hong mga tankers, mga barges, ships na lumubog dahil sumasayad po ang mga ito kapag nagko-cross between the Palace and the PSG compound. This is precisely the reason inalis po ang mga barges na ito dahil hindi po maka-cross. Ngayon, noong inalis na, ang sinabi ay ang buong Pasig River na ang linisin.

That was the reason this project was implemented. It was believed that flooding will somewhat be minimized because, if you will look at Laguna Lake which is 92,000 hectares, Your Honor, you can just imagine that body of water, Laguna Lake which is also, by the way, heavily silted by this time, you cannot do an effective control over flooding if you will not deepen the Pasig River.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, that is correct.

REP. SUAREZ. Noong pong taon na iyon,

nagkaroon po tayo nang pagpapalalim ng Pasig at pagpapalalim din po ang Laguna Lake. I think the agency that you are sponsoring is very familiar with that.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. When the project was supposed to be implemented in 2010, it was cancelled by the then administration.

REP. VARGAS. Iyong sa Laguna Lake po ay hindi natuloy pero iyong sa Pasig po, natuloy iyong project noong 2010 po.

REP. SUAREZ. That was during the time of GMA.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, definitely po.

REP. SUAREZ. Noong time po ng Aquino, none at all. Wala hong ginawang effort at all.

REP. VARGAS. None at all, and this Representation agrees with the Minority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ. Now, noong gagawin na po ang pagpapalalim ng Laguna Lake, the whole project controlling the quality of water was stopped. When that award was made during the term of then President Macapagal-Arroyo—sa European Union po, kapag may mga malalaking project na environmental ang concern, it is well received by the EU and they will put together an assistance program. Ang ginawa po nila ay halos wala na ho tayong babayaran, halos grant lahat. Noong pinahinto po ito ng Pangulong Aquino, no less than the Prince of Belgium came here to ask us to reconsider.

REP. VARGAS. That is true.

REP. SUAREZ. Not only was that a slap in the face of the Prince of Belgium, but it was an embarrassment to the European Union as it was flatly rejected for no reason at all. Because I was also involved, I was also a proponent during that time of cleaning this area because we believed that this will be good, as what Cong. Cesar Sarmiento has said, na puwede ho itong makatulong sa decongestion ng traffic dahil puwede tayo magkaroon ho ng two-way lane ng passenger ferry in the river. So, iyon ho ang nangyari.

Hindi lang ho iyon. Iyon pong mga nag-approve na projects ay dinala pa sa Arbitration Court, idinemanda pa po ng graft. You know how much money we spent, Your Honor, sending government officials to the Arbitration Court which was, I think, in Washington or New York? Billions of pesos, and we lost the case.

We lost the case in the Arbitration Court and we were penalized P2 billion for cancelling the contract. This is just to show you that, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, we should practice prudence in actions like this. Masyado hong pinu-politicalize natin ang nangyari. Kapag nagkaroon ho ng bagong pamunuan, they feel that everything that was done by the former heads were all bad. Sila lang ho ang may karapatang gumawa ng tama.

REP. VARGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the PRRC would like to manifest that...

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, ilan ho ang natanggal na natin na mga sunken barges and tankers and whatever in the Pasig River for the last three years? Kung minsan ho kasi may mga structures diyan na napabayaan na ng may-ari, then nagko-corrode na, nawawala na, then they become a hazard, then lulubog na.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Hindi po ba marami na ho tayong case na ganiyan, mga barges na hindi na nagagamit?

REP. VARGAS. Yes. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, in the last three years, wala pong masyadong natanggal, but during the time of PGMA, halos natanggal na po lahat as it is mandated for the Philippine Coast Guard to do so.

REP. SUAREZ. Iyon po bang pagpa-patrol sa Pasig River is under the Coast Guard?

REP. VARGAS. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. Is that under the Philippine Coast Guard?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is Coast Guard's responsibility.

REP. SUAREZ. So, can the office of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission commit to this Body, before we consider their proposed budget, that they will demolish those encroachments that make the width of Pasig River constricted? Can we have that commitment?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission fully commits.

REP. SUAREZ. What is their time frame? When will they start this demolition, Mr. Speaker?

REP. VARGAS. It is ongoing.

REP. SUAREZ. It is ongoing right now? You are doing demolition?

REP. VARGAS. Before the year 2022, the Pasig River is expected to be cleared of this.

REP. SUAREZ. Jack hammer na ho ang ginagamit ninyo rito, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Can you not use dynamite for blasting structures? If you have problems, you can subcontract, maybe, the NPAs as they are pretty good in blasting, or maybe the MILF. *(Laughter)*

REP. VARGAS. The PRRC has no ...

REP. SUAREZ. Then, when can we get the first phase of the demolition report, distinguished Sponsor, or maybe a report to the Body on what you have demolished—who owns the structures et cetera.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Your Honor, the PRRC will furnish you the report.

REP. SUAREZ. Wala ho naman kayong nare-receive na political intervention ng mga mayor na nakikiusap na huwag galawin? O mayroon po ba?

REP. VARGAS. Honestly, Mr. Speaker, there had been such reports.

REP. SUAREZ. Mayroon ho bang Congressmen?

REP. VARGAS. There were mayors.

REP. SUAREZ. Mayors only?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, mayors.

REP. SUAREZ. Mr. Speaker, I will suspend my interpellation on the proposed budget of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission because there are other Members who have the intention of asking questions. Nevertheless, I do not have any more questions on the proposed budget of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission.

REP. VARGAS. Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Thank you, Minority Leader.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

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

recognize the Gentleman from the Third District of Albay, Rep. Don Fernando V. Gonzalez.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Gentleman from the Third District of Albay, the honorable Don Fernando is recognized.

REP. GONZALEZ . Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Will the distinguished Gentleman afford me just one or two questions?

REP. VARGAS. Gladly, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GONZALEZ . May I ask this. The perennial problem in the Pasig River is the entrance to Laguna de Bay—the discharge. This has been an ongoing problem for the last 50 years. Ano ba ang ginagawa diyan to keep that channel always deep, the entrance?

REP. VARGAS. Dredging, Mr. Speaker. Dredging is the solution.

REP. GONZALEZ. The dredging must be permanent kasi ang nangyayari diyan, dine-dredge ninyo pero sandali lang ay bumababaw iyan. Nagsa-sandbar agad, pagkatapos, mababaw naman. Now, if you keep the channel always deep, the discharge of the water in the Pasig River, instead of taking 10 hours, will only take several hours, iyong tubig.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, that is correct, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GONZALEZ. So, bakit hindi maresolbahan iyan?

REP. VARGAS. The goal now, from the current 2.5 meters, is to deepen it, first, to 4 meters and then, to 6 meters deep so that the velocity of the water will increase, therefore, affecting in a positive manner the waste disposal.

REP. GONZALEZ. Bakit hindi natin gawin iyan, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. VARGAS. Well, aside from the budgetary constraints, because only 5 percent of their original request was granted by the DBM, the Department has no choice but to do it slowly but surely.

REP. GONZALEZ. Well, perhaps, it is time that we realize that failure to properly dredge the channel affects the discharge of the water from the Pasig River into Manila Bay and thus, is costing hundreds and hundreds of millions, even billions of pesos damages due to flooding.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, the flooding.

REP. GONZALES. So perhaps, maybe we can make a stronger representation na i-emphasize mo na iyan, na matapos ang problema na iyan sa dredging at saka lagyan na ninyo diyan ng permanenteng dredging equipment. Year-round kasi ang dredging diyan, hindi iyan puwede pasulpot-sulpot.

REP. VARGAS. That is true, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GONZALEZ. Kapareho ng Pasig River, idi-dredge ninyo ng isang beses, pagkatapos, susundan ninyo iyan after five years—bababaw iyan, kaya sayang lang iyong investment natin kung hindi ninyo isu-sustain iyong continuous dredging.

I have been working on the Pasig River for 45 years of my life and practically, I have been there my entire life. We have been operating barges—pababa, pataas, pababa, pataas. Maraming ganoon ang nagawa diyan but we have to admit, from the time 20 years ago and today, there has been a big change. Many good things had been done, particularly when Mme. Gina Lopez started the Pasig River Rehabilitation Program. Pagkatapos ngayon, mayroon na tayong agency. Ang kailangan lang siguro ay consistency. We have to sustain our efforts na kapag nag-dredge kayo, dapat may kasunod na dredging, dapat talaga may mag-draga kayo diyan—sige-sige dapat ang dredging, lalo doon sa bukana.

REP. VARGAS. That is correct.

REP. GONZALEZ. So, may I please emphasize the need to continuously dredge the Pasig River, but more importantly, I think, is the channel entering and discharging water into the Pasig River. Ang Pasig River is a tidal river—tumataas ang tide diyan, pumapasok ang tubig dagat pero kapag low tide, bumababa ang tubig, kaya kailangan ang pagpasok at pag-discharge nito ay mabilis. Ang bilis ng pagpasok nito kasi ay walang problema pero ang paglabas nito, kung mababaw iyong dulo, siyempre naki-curtail. So, can you please look into this?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, your suggestion regarding maintenance dredging is very, very important, and the PRRC would like to manifest further that we recognize the fundamental importance of dredging to keep the depth of the river at an ideal level for such reasons like you mentioned a while ago, but it is also fair to mention that the environmental health of the Pasig River also relies on the environmental health of the Laguna Lake. So if we are really serious about maintaining the Pasig River, we should be also be serious in dredging the Laguna Lake kasi diyan po

nanggagaling iyong tubig. Wala ring choice minsan, and I hope later on, as the government branch that has the power over the purse, we can give such importance in terms of fiscal support to the Pasig River and the Laguna Lake rehabilitation.

REP. GONZALEZ. Actually, Mr. Speaker, the deeper the Pasig River is, the more beneficial it is to the Laguna Lake kasi tumataas ang tubig diyan kaya madaling makalabas ito. Isa lang ang discharge ng Laguna Lake, sa Pasig River lang.

REP. VARGAS. Yes.

REP. GONZALEZ. You have to keep that in good condition all the time, otherwise, we will have problems there, including Marikina.

REP. VARGAS. Yes.

REP. GONZALEZ. I have one last question, Mr. Speaker, if you will allow me, on the transportation in the Pasig River. From time immemorial, for the last 30 years, we have tried that. Marami na ang mga nilagay natin diyan na transport—from dito sa downtown, going to Guadalupe and every time, it fails. Maybe it is because transport in the Pasig River is already obsolete, baka hindi na kailangan iyan. Mayroon na tayong LRT, mayroon na tayong ibang modes of transport, bakit pa natin gagamitin iyong ilog, samantalang if you want to go to Cubao from Quiapo, you do not have to take a boat ride to Guadalupe and then from Guadalupe, get a bus going to Cubao. You just take the LRT from downtown, diretso ka sa Cubao o kung saan ka man pupunta. Kaya siguro tingnan natin ho mabuti ito.

REP. VARGAS. Yes.

REP. GONZALEZ. Sige ang invest natin dito, hundreds of millions of pesos and then tatakbo lang ng mga ilang buwan at pagkatapos, wala na naman kasi wala namang sumasakay. Bakit ka naman sasakay? Why should you take a boat ride and then lilipat ka ng transport, samantalang you can already take the LRT or MRT, dire-diretso iyan sa pupuntahan ninyo.

REP. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, one of the suggestions or the things being explored in line with your suggestion is to create an MRT line from the Manila Bay to the Laguna Lake, using the Pasig River, the easement of the Pasig River. Right now, the ferry system actually has commuters and is pretty famous because of the level of traffic that we have now, where some commuters would rather go on a boat ride and still arrive at their destination faster than to go on a shorter route using a

vehicle or public utility vehicle. Sa ngayon po, medyo patok itong Pasig River ferry system because of the magnitude of the traffic problem. I think the real solution is an intermodal approach where you have the boat, you have the taxi, you have the LRT, you have the jeep, you have the bus, and you have a good placement of terminals.

REP. GONZALEZ. Well, apparently, the boats would not work. Do we now have a ferry service in Pasig River?

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GONZALEZ. How many passengers can it take? Because so many times, ilan ang inilagay natin diyan? Hindi naman successful iyan.

REP. VARGAS. It is under the MMDA program.

REP. GONZALEZ. It is not working. I mean, given the magnitude of the passenger system—I am just suggesting, Mr. Speaker.

REP. VARGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GONZALEZ. Because I have seen boat companies there by the dozens which failed. They invested hundreds of millions of government money pero wala namang nangyayari. So baka naman siguro oras na rin na tingnan natin. Huwag natin ipilit ang isang bagay na hindi na viable. Now, if you want to put a boat system, why do you not put one in Alabang? Put a bus terminal there and then get these people from Alabang using the buses, bring them to Guadalupe, bring them to Marikina. Mas maganda pa siguro iyon. Pinipilit natin ito dito sa Quiapo, dito sa downtown area, ay may LRT na diyan, may MRT na, so, ano pa ang gagawin nila, sasakay sila sa boat? Siguro, mahihirapan tayo.

Anyway, I am just making a suggestion because I have seen so many failures of this boat system na ginawa diyan at nanghihinayang din ako sa pera ng gobyerno. Baka magamit natin ito and so, if there are other plans and innovative ideas, why not? Let us all work together to plan something. Anyway, I have no more questions to ask, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much, Mr. Sponsor. Thank you so much.

REP. VARGAS. Thank you, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mr. Speaker, may we recognize the Gentleman from AANGAT TAYO Party-List, Representative Neil Abayon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Hon. Harlin Neil J. Abayon III is recognized to interpellate the good Sponsor.

REP. ABAYON. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Majority Leader, distinguished Sponsor. On behalf of the Minority, there being no other Member who wishes to interpellate, I move to close the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission.

I so move, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). What is the pleasure of the Majority?

REP. GARCIA (J.). In behalf of the Majority, Mr. Speaker, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission.

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

The period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission is hereby terminated.

Congratulations!

REP. VARGAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GARCIA (J.). I move to suspend the session, Mr. Speaker.

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

*It was 2:19 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 2:26 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Mylene J. Garcia-Albano presiding.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

## PANGASINAN STATE UNIVERSITY

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of the budget of the Pangasinan State University.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Lady from the Fourth District of Isabela, Rep. Ma. Lourdes R. Aggabao.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Lourdes Aggabao is recognized. Kindly proceed.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Second District of Pangasinan, Rep. Leopoldo N. Bataoil.

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

REP. BATAOIL. Mme. Speaker, may I ask the honorable Sponsor if she is willing to accept a short manifestation.

REP. AGGABAO. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BATAOIL. Mme. Speaker, earlier, I moved for the deferment of the Pangasinan State University budget for very important and valid reasons. Today, I interpose no objection to the passage of the PSU budget for 2019, together with my colleagues, Congressman Espino and Congressman Acop, for the sake of our students and faculty and staff, with a manifestation to continue with the scheduled holding of a meeting on Monday at 5:00 p.m. with the Board of Regents of the PSU and the OIC President to give the assurance that its President—who was suspended by the Ombudsman and declared *persona non grata* by the people of the province of Pangasinan and is facing around 11 administrative and criminal cases at the Ombudsman— will not be reinstated but will be replaced by anyone qualified, respected and dignified. That way, we will be assured that the people's money intended for the upgrade of the Pangasinan State University for 2019 will be truly put to good use.

Thank you, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, may we recognize the Representative from BUTIL Party-List, Rep. Cecilia Leonila V. Chavez.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Cecilia Leonila V. Chavez is recognized. Kindly proceed.

REP. CHAVEZ. Mme. Speaker, on the part of the Minority, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate, we move that we close the period of interpellation and debate.

I so move Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Pangasinan State University.

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

The period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Pangasinan State University is hereby terminated.

REP. GARCIA (J.). Mme. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the Pangasinan State University family headed by its OIC President, Dr. Paulo V. Cenas.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). To the members of the Pangasinan State University family, welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

## SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. GARCIA (J.). I move to suspend the session, Mme. Speaker.

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

*It was 2:29 p.m.*

## RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 2:37 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

## PHILIPPINE CHARITY SWEEPSTAKES OFFICE

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 8169, and may we request to begin the consideration of the budget of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. We would like to move for the recognition of the Sponsor, the Hon. Joey Sarte Salceda of the Second District of Albay.

Also, we welcome the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office family headed by Chairman Anselmo Simeon Pinili; Vice Chairman and General Manager Alexander Balutan; Board Director Marlon Balite; Board Director Jesus Manuel Suntay; Board Secretary Wesley Barayuga; Assistant GM for Brand Operations, Remeliza Gabuyo; AGM for Admin, Julieta Aseo; Assistant General Manager for Charity, Dr. Larry Cedro; for Gaming, Arnel Casas; Legal Department Manager, Atty. Anna Liza Inciong; Treasury Department Manager, Ria Asuit; Accounting Department Manager, Teresita Carbonel; Corporate Planning Manager, Jerusa Corpuz; Chief of Staff of the Chairman, Ted Quinao; and Public Relations Chief, Agnes Ibera.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). We welcome the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office family to the House of Representatives.

The Hon. Joey Salceda is hereby recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The honorable Congressman Edcel C. Lagman is recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Mme. Speaker, thank you. May we know why we are considering this agency in the Plenary, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office? We are not, in any way, giving any budget to this agency. All of the agencies we had discussed are agencies where the House, the Congress would give a corresponding budget. We had already considered, during the briefing, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office as a source agency of funds but not as a receiver of funds. So, may we know why it is being scheduled this afternoon?

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, I assume that we will consider the query of the Honorable Lagman as a point of order and therefore, allow, perhaps, the Sponsor to respond before we call on the first interpellator, if the Minority Leader is amenable.

REP. SALCEDA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Honorable Salceda may kindly proceed.

REP. SALCEDA. You know, Your Honor, so that we will have a more complete picture of the fiscal strategy of the government, there are three basic sources: BIR, Customs and, of course, the PAGCOR and the PCSO.

As you can see, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, for example, next year, this company or this GOCC actually will contribute a net of almost P22 billion after the impact of TRAIN on its operations. In a sense, this should have been done before so we would know exactly the contribution of the PCSO. I can enumerate exactly what the PCSO gives to the government: a dividend of P2.5 million which is given to the national government before May of the following year; taxes due to TRAIN, income tax of P1.2 billion; DST, from 10 to 20 percent increase due to TRAIN, of P12 billion; windfall tax, almost P5.2 billion; and the mandatory obligation given to certain entities of government like the Philippine Sports Commission, P1.3 billion, including the Charity Fund, P18 billion. The net to the national government is P22 billion, and in terms of what they do for individual medical assistance, it is about P18 billion.

Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, this is a significant aspect of our fiscal operation. To me, it is proper for this House to know exactly how our entities are performing and therefore, it would result in better decision-making with respect to the way we appropriate funds because we know where it is coming from.

REP. LAGMAN. We all know that, Mr. Speaker. All of these inputs had already been given by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office during the budget briefing before the Committee on Appropriations. My question is, why hail an agency to the Plenary if we do not give any budget to it because all of the agencies we had considered are those where the government gives a budget. Why are we making an exception when we already got the information during the budget briefing? Unless there is a special concern, and what the distinguished Sponsor said is not a special concern because we know that already.

REP. SALCEDA. Because, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, the contributions of the BIR and the Customs were properly considered by this honorable Body, by this august Chamber, in its entirety during the defense of the macroeconomic assumptions of the budgetary principles, during the consideration of the budget of the DOF. I think in that sense, there is no exception being made. What is really being made here is actually to complete essentially where we get our money from, for us to know how to spend it properly. To my mind,

it is just appropriate that the Body should know the contribution of the PCSO to the national government which is P22 billion, and what its contribution added to the gross value of the economy which is almost P40 billion, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor. There is nothing to lose but more to gain in terms of enlightening us, in terms of why we are taking up the PCSO in the Plenary.

REP. LAGMAN. Mme. Speaker, this Representation is not convinced with the answers of the distinguished Sponsor. This Body is supposed to know that already because there had already been a briefing and all of the information necessary had been inputted in the preparation of the NEP and the General Appropriations Bill. So, I will pursue my question which the Majority Leader considered as a point of order.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

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

*It was 2:44 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 2:53 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of the budget of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of some guests in the gallery, starting off with the guests of the Hon. Jeffrey D. Khonghun from the First District of Zambales. We have with us the Barangay Council members and other officials of Barangay West Tapinac, Olongapo City.

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

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROA-PUNO. I move to suspend the session, Mme. Speaker.

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

*It was 2:54 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 3:04 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

#### AURORA PACIFIC ECONOMIC ZONE AND FREEPORT AUTHORITY

REP. ROA. PUNO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 8169 and take up the budget of the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and FreePort Authority. May we recognize the Sponsor of the said budget, the Hon. Joey Sarte Salceda of the Second District of Albay.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Honorable Salceda is recognized. Kindly proceed.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the members of the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority present today, starting with the President and CEO, Israel F. Maducdoc; the Deputy Administrator, Edward A. Pineda; Atty. Archimedes A. Aldaba, the Legal Director; Anthony Valencia, the Finance Director; Harley Rose Daquioag, the Director; and Ma. Cristina Suaverdez and Luz Ann Jandoc.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The officials and family of the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority are welcome to the House of Representatives. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, I move to recognize the Hon. Harlin Neil J. Abayon III of AANGAT TAYO Party-List as the first interpellator on the budget of the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Honorable Abayon is hereby recognized. Kindly proceed.

REP. ABAYON. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, Majority Leader, distinguished Sponsor. On behalf of the Minority, there being no other Member who wishes to interpellate, I move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, I join the Minority in closing the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority is hereby terminated. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, I move to suspend the session for few minutes.

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

*It was 3:06 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 3:07 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, before we proceed, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo of the First District of Lanao del Norte, namely, the Schools Division Superintendent Roy Angelo Gazo; the Assistant Schools Division Superintendent Mary Ann Allera; and the School Principals from DepEd Lanao del Norte are all with us today.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). We welcome the guests of the Hon. Khalid Dimaporo to the House of Representatives.

Please proceed, Majority Leader.

#### CAGAYAN ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider the budget of the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority and recognize the Sponsor of the said budget, the honorable Representative Joey Sarte Salceda of the Second District of Albay.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. We would also like to welcome the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority family headed by the Hon. Raul Lambino, Secretary, Administrator and CEO; Rodrigo C. Pablo, Corporate Finance Services Chief; and Elsie F. Rodriguez, Senior Corporate Accountant.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Raul Lambino and the members of the family of the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority are hereby welcome to the House of Representatives.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, for his interpellation I move to recognize the Hon. Orestes T. Salon of the AGRI Party-List.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Kindly proceed, the honorable Congressman Salon.

REP. SALON. Thank you, Majority Leader, Mme. Speaker, honorable Sponsor. Since no member of the Minority will interpellate, I move to close the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, I join the Minority in closing the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority is hereby terminated.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROA-PUNO. I move to suspend the session, Mme. Speaker.

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

*It was 3:10 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 3:13 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 8169 and may we proceed to the budget of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. May we recognize the Sponsor, the Hon. Joey Sarte Salceda of the Second District of Albay.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Joey Salceda is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, we would also like to acknowledge the presence of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority family headed by Wilma Eisma, the Chairperson and Administrator; Ramon Agregado, Senior Deputy Administrator for Support Services; Antonietta Sanqui, Deputy Administrator for Finance; Mary Jamelle Camba, Tourism Department Manager; Editha Marza, Financial Planning and Budget Department Manager; Joel Ea, Internal Audit Services Manager; Gary Fernandez, Engineering Department Manager; Karen Magno, OIC, Business and Investment; Pedro Terrencio, Airport Department; Lilibeth Baza, Seaport Department; Melvin Varias, Legal Department; Ariel Napalan, Utilities Department; Genie Vicente, Accounting Department; Selina Jayme, Ecology Department; Elmer Libo, Telecoms Department; Anthony Morales, Support Staff; and Marcelino Sanqui, Senior Deputy Administrator for Operations.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). We welcome the family of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority to Congress.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, for his interpellation, I move that we recognize the Hon. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate of BAYAN MUNA Party-List.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Honorable Zarate is hereby recognized. Kindly proceed.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Magandang hapon ho sa ating lahat. Will the distinguished Sponsor entertain some clarificatory questions?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Your Honor. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, nitong nakaraan po, ang Kinatawang ito ng BAYAN MUNA ay naghain ng isang resolusyon upang imbestigahan itong halos dalawang dekadang mahigit nang kalakaran ng kontraktwalisasyon ng mga manggagawa sa loob ng Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. Alam naman natin na noong mapatalsik iyong mga Amerikano, naitayo itong SBMA at maraming mga kababayan natin na malapit diyang sa base na iyan ay nag-volunteer na tulungan itong SBMA. Kalakhan sa kanila ay naglilinis, nag-volunteer sa kung anu-anong mga gawain, at naging casual employees ang mga ito kalaunan, ngunit noon kapanahunan ni dating Presidente Fidel Ramos, ang mga casual employees na ito na mga dating volunteer rin ay nilagay sa isang manpower agency na tinawag na Freeport Services Corporation, Incorporated na pag-aari rin ng SBMA.

Kinalaunan, ang Freeport Services Corporation na ito ay siya ring naging daan para rin ma-lay off en masse iyong mga dating volunteer na naging casual, na deka-dekada na ngang nagtrabaho diyang sa SBMA at nag-declare ito ng bankruptcy, kung hindi ako nagkakamali noong 2009. Sa kasalukuyan, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker, kalakhan ng mga manggagawa sa SBMA ay nasa categoryang contracts of service, job orders or iyong tinatawag nating MOA—Memorandum of Agreement na paggawa. Kung hindi ako nagkakamali, halos 50 porsiyento o kalahati ng mga operasyon ng SBMA ay nasa kontraktwal. Halos 25 years na rin ang SBMA kaya ito po ay gusto nating pagtuunan ng pansin dahil hindi naman siguro natin maitatwa na napakalaki rin ng ambag nitong ating mga ordinaryong manggagawa kung paanong naging SBMA ngayon ang SBMA. Kaya sa mga katanungan ko po, ang gusto kong unang tanungin, para po sa susunod natin na taon,

magkano ba ang hihinging budget ng SBMA mula dito sa Kapulungang ito, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. They are asking for P381 million, Your Honor.

REP. ZARATE. So, P381 million?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ZARATE. Kumusta naman po ang SBMA bilang isang ahensiya? Ito ba ay matatawag nating booming, kumikita, o ito ay palugi bilang isang ahensiya?

REP. SALCEDA. Kumikita po. Iyong Revenues Fund nila ay umaabot po ng P3 billion taun-taon.

REP. ZARATE. So, P3 billion ang revenue nila.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, P3 bilyon.

REP. ZARATE. Tama po, dahil nitong nakaraan nga ay mayroon akong nabasa na ang SBMA nga ay nagpatayo ng mga imprastraktura na nagkakahalaga ng P10.2 billion. So, safe po na sabihin na booming naman ang mga negosyo sa SBMA, kumikita naman ito at in fact, isa ito sa mga ahensiya ng pamahalaan na talagang masasabi nating not in the red at nagbibigay ng ambag sa pambansang pamahalaan. Tama po ba iyon, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po. Iyong dibidendo last year nila na binigay sa national government ay P800 million.

REP. ZARATE. Okay, salamat po, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker. Ang sunod ko pong katanungan—ilan po ang mga manggagawa ngayon ng SBMA mula ho sa pinakamataas na posisyon hanggang doon sa pinakamababa.

REP. SALCEDA. There are 2600.

REP. ZARATE. So, 2,600?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, after the retrenchment of 800.

REP. ZARATE. Okay. Out of the 2,600 po, ilan ho sa kanila ang regular at ilan naman iyong kontraktwal?

REP. SALCEDA. May 1,000 ang regular, pagkatapos 1,600 kontraktwal.

REP. ZARATE. So, 1,600 ho iyong kontraktwal.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ZARATE. Okay. Salamat po. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, mayroon ho noon nakaraang taon, noong June 2017 ay naglabas ng isang Joint Circular No. 1 ang DBM, Civil Service Commission at ang Commission on Audit na nagsasaad na lahat ng ahensiya ng pamahalaan, maging lokal man o national, at mga government-owned and-controlled corporation, ay pinapayagan na lang na hanggang sa katapusan ng taon na ito, December 31, 2018, na mag-hire ng mga contracts of service, job orders at mga MOA workers.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po.

REP. ZARATE. Iyon po ang ating katanungan—ano na po ang magiging kapalaran nitong sinasabi nating 1,600 contractual workers ngayon ng SBMA, Your Honor?

REP. SALCEDA. Iyong 1,200 po will be regularized at nasa gitna na po ng proseso ng approval po ng DBM para sa kanila pong OSSP o iyong kanilang plantilla positions—for approval po. Inaasahan po na iyong 400— ang desisyon po ng Board ay ipa-bidding sa isang service provider at nakalagay po, doon sa service provider, na iyong 400 ay dapat permanente sa kanila.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker. So, lilinawin ko lang po. Doon sa 1,600, 1,200 doon ay ipinanukala na maging regular sila sa SBMA.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, may OSSP.

REP. ZARATE. May plantilla positions? Tama po ba?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, tama po.

REP. ZARATE. Okay. At least, it is on record now na mayroong 1,200. Ito po ba ay naaprubahan na ng DBM, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Nilalakad pa po sa DBM.

REP. ZARATE. So, wala pa pong katiyakan kung maaprub nila ito.

REP. SALCEDA. Iyong desisyon po, from a corporate strategy, your Honor, the Board has decided, really, na i-permanent po itong 1,200 dahil kritikal po sila sa operasyon ng SBMA—hindi naman sa gamitan pero importante po sila sa success ng SBMA, para ma-achieve po iyong kanilang mission, vision at saka contribution sa national goals, na ma-permanent ang mga ito, dahil mahalaga po sa SBMA itong 1,200.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat, Your Honor, Mme. Speaker. Nabanggit din ninyo nga na itong balanse na 400, sila ho ay ipapasa doon sa isang service provider, tama po?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ZARATE. Ang service provider na ito ay isang private agency, tama po ba iyon?

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, ibi-bidding po.

REP. ZARATE. Iyon nga po ang gusto nating malinaw—at ibinabalik-balik ko rin ang katanungang ito sa iba pang mga ahensiya. Dito nalalagay sa isang nakakatawa at nakakagalit rin minsan na sitwasyon, na ang pamahalaan, ang sinasabi nito sa pribadong sektor, “Tapusin na ninyo iyang endo, tapusin na iyang kontraktwalisasyon,” pero napakarami pong mga ahensiya natin, kasama na rin ang SBMA dito, ay may maraming kontraktwal. Sa darating nga na taon, sa January 1, sa halip na i-absorb natin lahat sila at gawing regular ang karamihan nito dahil 25 years na rin silang nandiyan sa SBMA, may 400 po rito ang ipapasa natin sa service provider or mga agencies.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo.

REP. ZARATE. Kahit na ho sinabi ninyo na mayroong assurance na gawin silang permanente doon sa terms of reference na sinasabi ninyo.

REP. SALCEDA. Opo, kasama po iyan doon sa ibi-bidding na dapat permanent position po.

REP. ZARATE. Panghahawakan po natin iyan pero ang Kinatawang ito ho ay hindi pa rin sumasang-ayon sa patakarang ito dahil sa katunayan, kahit na sila ay nasa isang service provider, wala pa rin puwedeng sabihin natin na sila ay mayroong security of employment for the meantime. Iyong kanilang security of tenure, bilang mga manggagawa, ay wala pa rin hong kasiguruhan.

REP. SALCEDA. Iyong totoong kuwento po, lahat naman dapat siguro ay gustong kunin ng SBMA pero ang kaso, hindi ho sila makakuha ng Civil Service Eligibility kaya po iyong 400 ay dito po idinaan. Iyong 1,200 po, nakapag-comply po sila kaya automatic for regularization as permanent employees po sila ng SBMA. Kaso, iyong 400 po talaga ay mukhang nahihirapan pong makakuha po ng Civil Service Eligibility. Para po masunod ang inatas po ng ating gobyerno ay idinaan na lang po sa isang service provider pero nakasaad po doon na dapat gawing permanente po iyong 400 na mga empleyadong ito.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po, Your Honor, at nabanggit po ninyo, totoo po iyan, karamihan po diyan, ang naging dahilan talaga, na halos 800,000 na mga contractuels, job orders, ...

REP. SALCEDA. And MOA.

REP. ZARATE. ... at MOA sa iba't-ibang ahensiya sa buong kapuluan—out of our 2.5 million state workers o mga kawani sa pamahalaan, may 800,000 tayong, more or less, na mga contractuels at sa karamihan diyan, ang sinasabi nila, ay kasi walang eligibility. Kaya siguro, bilang panghuli, Your Honor, tatanungin ko po ang inyong magiging tindig dito.

Mayroon tayong inihain na panukalang batas ang BAYAN MUNA dito, ang House Bill No. 7415. Ang layunin nito ay magbigay ng substitute Civil Service Eligibility doon sa ating mga kawani na matagal nang nanunungkulan. Halimbawa, bilang isang clerk ay kabisado na niya ang trabaho niya pero hindi lang pumasa-pasa sa Civil Service ay puwede nang mabigyan siya ng substitute Civil Service Eligibility. Puwede ho bang masuportahan ng ating Sponsor ang ganitong klaseng panukala?

REP. SALCEDA. Pag-aaralan ko po, kasi alam po ninyo, ang pumapasa po sa Civil Service Examination ay umaabot lang po ng 8 percent. Baka unfair naman po doon sa 92 percent na hindi makapasa-pasa. Titingnan ko po kung papaano po gagawin nating patas na iyong pag-grant po ng alternate o proxy o masasabi nating substitute eligibility at kung ano po iyong proseso para naman po doon sa 92 percent na hindi makapasa-pasa, dahil ang pinakamahirap na exam po talaga dito sa Pilipinas ay ang Civil Service examination.

Your Honor, I am very much willing, pag-aaralan ko po iyong proposal ninyo, dahil kung ito po ang makapagbibigay and could strengthen the bargaining position of labor vis-à-vis the market, including the government, I think it is the State's duty, na kasama po para po ma-ensure ang mas patas na lipunan, ay dapat mabigyan po ng pagkakataon ang lahat upang mabigyan ang lahat ng chance na makapagtrabaho sa gobyerno.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po, Your Honor. Ang atin lang naman layunin po dito ay mabigyan nga ng kasiguruhan ang trabaho at hanapbuhay ang ating mga kasamahan na maging mga kawani sa pamahalaan.

Maraming salamat, Your Honor.

REP. SALCEDA. Salamat po.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, for his interpellation, I move that we recognize the Hon. Frederick W. Siao of the Lone District of Iligan City.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. SIAO. For the Minority, Mme. Speaker, there being no other member from the Minority who wishes to ask questions, I move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority—SBMA.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, I join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority or SBMA.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROA-PUNO. I move to suspend the session, Mme. Speaker.

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

*It was 3:28 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 3:31 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, before we proceed, we would like to acknowledge the presence of more guests in the gallery, starting off with the Trade Union Confederation of Finland headed by Miss Laura Ekolm, Niko Simula and Pia Bjorkbacka. I hope I did justice to the pronunciation of their names—they are

all from Finland labor unions and they are with us in the gallery today. They are guests of the Hon. Raymond Democrito C. Mendoza of the TUCP Party-List and the Hon. Yedda Marie K. Romualdez of the First District of Leyte.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). We welcome our guests from Finland. (*Applause*)

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, we would also like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of the Hon. Winston “Winnie” Castelo of the Second District of Quezon City, the Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship 2-1 class. They are having a study tour and they are here with us today from the PUP-Quezon City Branch.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Welcome to the House of Representatives, our guests from the PUP-Quezon City Branch. (*Applause*) Welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### AUTHORITY OF THE FREEPORT AREA OF BATAAN

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 8169 and commence with the interpellation on the budget of the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan. May we recognize the Sponsor of the said budget, the Hon. Joey Sarte Salceda of the Second District of Albay.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Joey Salceda is recognized.

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, for his interpellation, I move to recognize the Hon. Anthony M. Bravo, PhD of the COOP-NATCCO Party-List.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Tony Bravo is recognized for his interpellation. Kindly proceed.

REP. ROA-PUNO. I beg your pardon, Mme. Speaker. Before we do so, I would like to first acknowledge the presence of the members of the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan, namely: Emmanuel Pineda, Chairman and Administrator; Roderick Manzano, Deputy Administrator for Support Services; Christina Rodrigo, Head, Corporate Planning Department; Sixto Inales, Department Manager,

Freeport Facilities; Jerome Yumul, Senior Project Planning and Development Officer, Corporate Planning; and Ma. Gladys Seraja, Corporate Budget Specialist.

Now, may we recognize once again, the Hon. Tony Bravo.

REP. BRAVO (A.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. There being no other member from the Minority who wishes to ask questions, I move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, I join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan is hereby terminated. (*Applause*)

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROA-PUNO. I move to suspend the session, Mme. Speaker.

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

*It was 3:35 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 3:39 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we begin the consideration of the budget of the Department of Science and Technology.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano).

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

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the honorable Sponsor, Rep. Seth Frederick P. Jalosjos of the First District of Zamboanga del Norte to sponsor and answer questions, if any, on the budget of the Department of Science and Technology.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. JALOSJOS. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Mme. Speaker, I have the pleasure of sponsoring the budget of the Department of Science and Technology with a total budget requirement of P19,801,216,000. I am now ready to answer any questions.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, before we start, may we acknowledge the presence of the DOST family headed by Secretary Fortunato De La Peña, Undersecretary Carol Yorobe, Undersecretary Rowena Cristina Guevara, Undersecretary Brenda Nazareth-Manzano, Assistant Secretary Leah Buendia, Assistant Secretary Emmanuel Galvez, Assistant Secretary Teodoro Gatchalian, and the heads of the attached agencies, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The honorable Secretary and the members of the family of the DOST are welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, the first one to interpellate, may we recognize the honorable Rep. Frederick W. Siao of the Lone District of Iligan City.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Frederick Siao is recognized.

REP. SIAO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Will the good Sponsor yield to some questions?

REP. JALOSJOS. Of course, Mme. Speaker, I am ready to answer any questions of the good Congressman or Representative from Iligan City of Iligan Province.

REP. SIAO. As to the project that benefited Iligan

and nearby areas, the Lake Lanao research study has been funded by the NRCP and handled by some NRCP research members from MSU-IIT in Marawi. The study looked into the ecological state and governance challenges in Lake Lanao in particular. My question, Mme. Speaker, my first question: May I know how the DOST is providing the research and in support to policies and programs for the conversion and protection of Lake Lanao be insured?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, actually, the DOST is currently in a program that is continuing to do consultative measures to study so they can come up with policy measures as regards the Lake Lanao preservation group.

REP. SIAO. Mme. Speaker, among the agencies of the DOST, the lowest in budget is that of the NRCP, the National Research Council of the Philippines. Its budget share in the R&D or the research and development of the DOST has been around 0.3 percent for the past three years. May we know how it can be addressed, or if we can increase the budget for this particular agency that helps in the research of, particularly, in my area of responsibility—AOR.

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, actually, the NRCP is a collegial body and as a collegial body it has already been trying to request for more funds. And, although, this is badly needed, hindi po nabigyan ng Tier 2 ng pondo. Nevertheless, the funds that are needed to continue further research is also being requested through the Office of the Secretary and doon po nabibigyan ng sapat na pondo, after due deliberations, on the need of the NRCP. In fact, wala po silang hiningi na hindi po naibigay from the Office of the Secretary.

So, tuloy-tuloy po iyong research nila and we are assured that the NRCP will be funded, well-funded, for all its programs. Mayroon pong programa—not a program, internal, na lahat ng councils are doing or are sharing para mabigyan ng sapat na pondo itong NRCP, and for the programs that are needed.

REP. SIAO. Uulitin ko, Mme. Speaker, through the Sponsor, it means kapag may kailangan, puwedeng humingi ulit. Is that correct, Mme. Speaker?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, that is correct. Ang ginagawa po ng NRCP is, with regard to your case which is the Lake Lanao, nagtatayo po sila ng group or they are being invited to attend, para mabigyan po ng oras o sapat na panahon, consultative meetings with stakeholders, para mabigyan po ng tamang oras at pondo iyong research.

REP. SIAO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. My last

question. We are aware of the NRCP's research on Lake Lanao and the Mindanao Policy Forum held last month. Are there plans for further research on Lake Lanao which is the source of livelihood of Mindanaoans and is an expression of our heritage?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker. We are happy to report na tuloy-tuloy po iyong programa and we will discuss the recommendations as regards the policies as the program goes further within the year.

REP. SIAO. Mme. Speaker, I hope wala namang kulang sa budget.

REP. JALOSJOS. Kulang?

REP. SIAO. Wala bang kulang?

REP. JALOSJOS. In fact, nabawasan po ng 7 percent iyong pondo from last year's budget pero wala pong pagkukulang kasi lahat po ng mga programa ay nabibigyan ng sapat na pondo from the budget of the Secretary and nagsi-share rin po iyong mga councils.

REP. SIAO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, and I would like to thank the Sponsor for the clarifications. Thank you.

REP. JALOSJOS. Thank you po, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, we recognize the honorable Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr. from the Third District of Camarines Sur for his interpellation.

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

REP. BORDADO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Mr. Sponsor, the budget of the DOST in 2018 was P21.02 billion. Is that correct, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. JALOSJOS. That is correct.

REP. BORDADO. Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, this budget was slashed to a level of P19.5 billion for 2019. Is that correct, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, that is correct.

REP. BORDADO. So, there was a slashed in the budget.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, there was.

REP. BORDADO. I understand that the DOST has 18 attached agencies. Is that correct, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

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

REP. BORDADO. Based on the data provided to this Representation, the Philippine Science High School has the highest allocation. Is that correct?

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

REP. BORDADO. So, that is correct. The Philippine Science High School has the highest allocation.

REP. JALOSJOS. That is correct.

REP. BORDADO. Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, aside from its main campus in Quezon City, how many other campuses, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, I would like to make a correction. It is actually the Science Education Institute, the one in charge of the scholars. That is the one which has the highest budget allocation.

REP. BORDADO. The Science Education Institute.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, the Science Education Institute.

REP. BORDADO. This particular Institute is handling the scholarship program.

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

REP. BORDADO. Aside from the main campus here in Quezon City, how many campuses does the Philippine Science High School have in the other areas of the country?

REP. JALOSJOS. There are 16 in all, Mme. Speaker, one for every region.

REP. BORDADO. One for every region.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes. According to law, there should be one for every region.

REP. BORDADO. So, the main campus in Quezon City plus 16 other campuses.

REP. JALOSJOS. Plus 15, it is 16 in total, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, do you know the total population of the Philippine Science High School?

REP. JALOSJOS. I has a total of 8,350 students, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. Son 8,350 students.

REP. JALOSJOS. Scholars or students.

REP. BORDADO. As of 2018?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes.

REP. BORDADO. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker. According, again, to the data provided to this Representation, the Philippine Science High School has the highest amount of unused appropriations. What is the reason for this?

REP. JALOSJOS. This is actually caused by the slow or in many cases, of failed biddings for construction, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. Slow?

REP. JALOSJOS. Failed biddings.

REP. BORDADO. So, failed biddings. In all the campuses of the Philippine Science High School?

REP. JALOSJOS. Of many of the campuses because they increased the number of buildings because of Grade 11 and Grade 12.

REP. BORDADO. Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, do you have specific figures to back up this claim because I cannot understand why we should have failed biddings.

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, that is a practice that we have no control of. If there are no winners, then there is a failed bidding and so we have to repeat the process again and that is the main reason there are a lot of unused funds. Mme. Speaker, if you would like, we could copy furnish you.

REP. BORDADO. Yes, kindly provide us with a copy, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, with the list of all the schools and the projects that have failed in the bidding process.

REP. BORDADO. By the way, Mme. Speaker,

Mr. Sponsor, can you give me the specific amount representing all these failed biddings?

REP. JALOSJOS. Excuse me, Mme. Speaker, we would just have to refer to the data. Mme. Speaker, and the total of P300 million was unused. These are failed and unfinished projects.

REP. BORDADO. It is P300 million?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, P300 million, Mme. Speaker. Out of P2 billion allocation, there was an unused amount of P300 million in unfinished projects.

REP. BORDADO. I am just wondering whether these projects can be actually completed in the light of the fact that we will now shift to the so-called Cash-Based System.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker. We have an assurance that we could complete these projects. It would just take a little bit more time.

REP. BORDADO. Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, the Philippine Science High School is working under the so-called Obligations-Based System and once we shift to the Cash-Based System, I believe that the Philippine Science High School will have a lot of problems here, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, the big allocation is only around this year and last year, considering the influx on the number of students and numbers of buildings. We are expecting, by next year, that this would have already been finished and before we enter into the Cash-Based Program, all these will be utilized.

REP. BORDADO. In other words, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, there is this commitment or assurance coming from the Philippine Science High School that such projects will be completed.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, that is correct.

REP. BORDADO. I am just concerned because the Philippine Science High School is the premiere science high school in the country. So, we are in need of these equipment, we are in need of these buildings for our students. Do you agree, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. JALOSJOS. We agree, Mme. Speaker, and yes, this is a commitment of the Secretary himself that all these will be finished or completed by next year.

REP. BORDADO. Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, I also have the data stating to the effect that next to the Philippine Science High School, PAGASA has the highest amount of unused appropriations. This is quite disturbing, Mme. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone areas in the world. What is the reason PAGASA cannot use its appropriations, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, yes, that is correct. Actually, PAGASA has a total of P187 million of unused appropriations or savings and as time goes by, because they already purchased equipment, hindi na po kailangan o hindi na kailangan ipalabas iyong ibang—yes. Actually, these savings—that is correct, Mme. Speaker—babalik po iyon sa General Fund. So, that is correct, Mme. Speaker, PAGASA has the biggest budget after the Philippine Science High School although it does not hamper any of the programs within its reach.

REP. BORDADO. It does not hamper? What do you mean, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, what you are referring is the program itself, but what we are trying to explain is the funds that had not been utilized are actually based or intended for the construction of the buildings. Hindi po sa programa ng PAGASA itself, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, we have been reading a lot of reports from various media platforms regarding the lack of equipment. So, you are saying here that we have an unused appropriations of P187 million.

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, let me just clarify that the P184 million does not include equipment. Mayroon po tayong sapat na equipments. Let me reiterate that the P184 million unspent was the savings for the construction of the buildings. Hindi po sa equipments.

REP. BORDADO. In other words, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor— is it P187 million o P184 million?

REP. JALOSJOS. It is P187 million.

REP. BORDADO. So, P187 million is earmarked for buildings and not for equipment.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, around 300 buildings.

REP. BORDADO. Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, are

you telling us that the PAGASA has all the necessary equipment?

REP. JALOSJOS. For the modernization, Mme. Speaker, yes, we have enough equipment but there is still a need to construct additional radar stations as of the moment, just around 4.

By 2020, we will have sufficient radar stations around. Ang target natin is around 20, and as of now, we already have 16, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. So, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, are you telling me that the equipment we now have can really provide the DOST or PAGASA with the capability to serve the people, especially during the last quarter of the year when typhoons will be striking the Philippine Area of Responsibility?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, in terms of monitoring typhoons, once we hit the 20 mark, we will have enough, and going back to what was asked a while ago, with regard to the four needed radar stations, again, we just need to construct the four buildings to already complete the need of 20, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. I just cannot comprehend what the good Sponsor is saying here, Mme. Speaker. Let me just simplify my questioning, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. Does the DOST-PAGASA, PAGASA specifically, have the necessary equipment to cope with the obligation, responsibilities of the Agency in light of what we now have—climate change, Mme. Speaker?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, as provided in the Modernization Act, we already have sufficient equipment and we have already procured what is necessary and, Mme. Speaker, our forecast accuracy is 94 kilometer-error for 24 hours as compared to the World Meteorological ...

REP. BORDADO. How is that again, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor? What is the error rate?

REP. JALOSJOS. The forecast error ...

REP. BORDADO. How do you put that? Forecast ...

REP. JALOSJOS. Forecast error.

REP. BORDADO. Forecast error is?

REP. JALOSJOS. Ninety-four kilometers for a 24-hour forecast.

REP. BORDADO. Ninety-four kilometers.

REP. JALOSJOS. ...compared to the World Meteorological Organization which is 120. So, mas mataas po ang ating accuracy compared to the ...

REP. BORDADO. Compared to the ...

REP. JALOSJOS. ... World ...

REP. BORDADO. ... World ...

REP. JALOSJOS. ... Meteorological Organization.

REP. BORDADO. ... Meteorological Organization or ...

REP. JALOSJOS. Organization.

REP. BORDADO. ... the WMO.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes.

REP. BORDADO. So, we have a more accurate set of instruments.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes.

REP. BORDADO. Is that correct?

REP. JALOSJOS. That is correct, Mme. Speaker, particularly radar stations.

REP. BORDADO. But I am still bothered, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, by this very low disbursement percentage on the part not only of PAGASA, but of the other attached agencies of the DOST. In fact, according to my records here, the DOST has only a disbursement rate of 69.1 percent. Is that correct, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

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

REP. BORDADO. So, how do you plan to address this low disbursement rate?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, the obligation rate is around 95 percent but the cash disbursement, which you are talking about, is only sixty ...

REP. BORDADO. It is 69.1...

REP. JALOSJOS. It is 69.1.

REP. BORDADO. ...percent.

REP. JALOSJOS. So, yes.

REP. BORDADO. But then, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, I am worried that the DOST will further be affected by the shift to the so-called Cash-Based System, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. Can you respond to that observation that the DOST will further suffer in terms of the disbursement ability once the Cash-Based System is ...

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes.

REP. BORDADO. ...implemented.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker. Actually, we are still in 2018 and we have around at least three months to go before we convert to Cash-Based. We are assured by the Agency that we have enough time for us to disburse our funds by then.

REP. BORDADO. Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, do you not think that this is a reflection of the inability of the DOST to properly implement its projects?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, let me just clarify. The reason for the big amount of funds that you see is, although they have been obligated, around 95 percent of these equipment cannot be paid unless delivered. So, we have been waiting for it and I think three months is enough time for them to deliver so we can actually already pay and utilize the funds for that purpose.

REP. BORDADO. So, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, the problem lies in the private sector.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, yes, I agree. Yes, you are correct, Mme. Speaker. It is just a matter of time. All we have to do is wait until the procurement process has been given due time.

REP. BORDADO. So, you have suppliers, you have these corporations, you have these companies who are not complying with the timelines?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, we have to understand this is very technical work and most of the equipment we ordered are all imported due to the quality. So, this is something that we cannot really give a timeline to, but we are assured by the Agency that within three months, it will all be delivered, and all the funds that were obligated could already be finished by then.

REP. BORDADO. So, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, again, there is this commitment coming from the Department of Science and Technology that things will be addressed accordingly.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes.

REP. BORDADO. The problems will be addressed accordingly.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, because going back to the obligation method, it has already been obligated although we cannot pay just yet until the equipment have been properly delivered. So, we are just waiting and we have been assured that within a three-month time period, maa-address na po it.

REP. BORDADO. Again, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, aside from the Philippine Science High School and PAGASA, the Advanced Science and Technology Institute has also a large chunk, a high amount of unused appropriations. Again, what is the reason for this?

REP. JALOSJOS. Can you please repeat your question, Mme. Speaker? I am sorry.

REP. BORDADO. Aside, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, aside from the Philippine Science High School and PAGASA, we also have the Advanced Science and Technology Institute or the ASTI with a very high amount of unused appropriations. What is the reason for this?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, the reason is the high amount coming from the savings from procurement, which in total is P101,463,603, and the failed biddings of P21,972,696 with a total of P123,000,436.

REP. BORDADO. So, again, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, it all boils down to the procurement system?

REP. JALOSJOS. Savings and procurement, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. Now, can we have the commitment of the DOST, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, that once and for all, it will address this procurement-system problem?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker. The Secretary and the Agency has made its commitment that within three months, we will address this problem.

REP. BORDADO. Thank you very much, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker.

I fully support the Department of Science and Technology. In fact, I even want to facilitate the increase in its budget, but records, however, show that it cannot use the appropriations. Medyo nakakalungkot isipin na binibigyan ng appropriations ang DOST subalit hindi ito nagagamit.

REP. JALOSJOS. That is a correct observation, Mme. Speaker, but it is mainly because we are using the Obligation-Based System. But once we transfer to the Cash-Based System, maa-address na rin po itong problema natin. Like we said, mataas po iyong obligation.

REP. BORDADO. So, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, you are now saying that it will be good for the DOST to use the so-called Cash-Based System?

REP. JALOSJOS. Well, we are just saying, Mme. Speaker, that we can adapt or the Agency is adaptable. Although medyo mas mahirap, we can still fully adapt to the change, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. Okay. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

I do hope that the DOST can really address this concern. Sayang, because we are very confident that we have very intelligent people in the Department, in the Agency, at kailangang-kailangan po natin ang DOST para umunlad ang ating bansa, pero kung ganito ang nangyayari na we cannot even use the appropriations earmarked for the Agency, medyo mahirap po. So, again you have this commitment, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, that the DOST will squarely address the problems discussed earlier.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker. Again, we really have the commitment and assurance from the Secretary himself and the Agency that all these problems that you have raised would be squarely addressed in terms of the utilization of the funds of the Department of Science and Technology.

REP. BORDADO. Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Sponsor. Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker.

REP. JALOSJOS. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, we recognize the Hon. Khalid Dimaporo of the First District of Lanao del Norte.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mme. Speaker, is the Honorable Sponsor willing to yield to some short questions?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mme. Speaker, from my nine years' worth of experience in the LGU as a Local Chief Executive, I personally feel that the Department of Science and Technology is one of the primary departments that leads in assistance in the local level, for us to develop our provinces and our municipalities. And I would just like to articulate the benefits that are coming from the Department of Science and Technology.

Mme. Speaker, may I ask what exactly, maybe we can hear, put it on the record, what are the programs of the DOST that are being implemented on the ground as of 2018 and will be continued to be implemented on the ground in 2019? For example, when I was Governor, we received a lot of programs to assist our municipalities and cooperatives, and women sector associations in terms of food processing, aggregate technology. These are things that we received from the Department of Science and Technology, Mme. Speaker. I would like to know if these programs are still alive and can be availed of in 2019 in our province and in our region.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, the priority programs of the DOST are solely based on research and development, scholarships, assistance to SMEs, and livelihood through technology, and yes, to answer your question, Mme. Speaker, these will still be continued this coming 2019.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mme. Speaker, may we put a number to it. Livelihood and technology—that is a very juicy one—how much is in the 2019 Budget and how much is in the 2018 Budget for that, just in total, or I am willing to suffice, Mme. Speaker, for the total amount of programs that will be implemented on the ground, Mme. Speaker, by the Department of Science and Technology?

REP. JALOSJOS. For the livelihood under the SETUP program of the DOST for SMEs, we have a total of P848 million for 2019, same as with 2018. So, 2018 and 2019 Budgets, they are the same, no change, Mme. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). So, the total livelihood and technology fund is P800 million, Mme. Speaker?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, for the SETUP, livelihood and technology, it is P849 million.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). In totality, for the Department of Science, ah sorry, Livelihood and Technology, are there other programs that cater to livelihood development or is it just SETUP?

REP. JALOSJOS. There is P400 million for Community Empowerment through Science and

Technology; SMEs – P848 million; and Scholarships – P4.5 billion, so the bulk, P4.5 billion for scholarships so . . .

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). It is 4.5 billion?

REP. JALOSJOS. For the scholarships, Mme. Speaker, so we have . . .

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mme. Speaker, if I may have this confirmed, it is P4.5 billion for scholarships; P800 million, P400 million and another P800 million roughly so we are looking at about P1.6, maybe about P2 billion, total?

REP. JALOSJOS. Let me correct you, Mme. Speaker. It is P848 million for the SMEs; and for livelihood, we have P400 million.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Okay. So, Mme. Speaker, can I say P1.2 billion is used for livelihood and technology? Am I correct in saying this, honorable Sponsor?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, you are correct, Mme. Speaker.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). So, for 2018 and 2019, we are looking at about P1.2 billion for livelihood and technology that is being sponsored or approved by Congress to be implemented in our different provinces for the benefit of our cooperatives, associations, municipalities who want to have a better standard of living, or maybe have a business or livelihood, and this is the government giving them assistance and technology to do so. On top of that also, we are giving our provinces, municipalities and our constituents P4.5 billion worth of scholarships, and this is from the Department of Science and Technology, Mme. Speaker.

I am trying to quantify the benefits that we here in Congress will be giving to our constituents next year. May I have this corrected, ah, confirmed.

REP. JALOSJOS. That is correct, Mme. Speaker, yes.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Now, Mme. Speaker, my next question is in regard to the ARMM or the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Earlier, prior to me, the Hon. Freddie Siao was talking about Lake Lanao, and if I am not mistaken, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, as part of the Act that created it, specified that one of the special powers given to the ARMM as an autonomous institution is science and technology. So, technically, DOST cannot implement directly inside the ARMM, it has to seek the concurrence of the ARMM because of the ARMM government's autonomy.

May I have that confirmed if I am correct in seeing so, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Okay. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

The reason I would like to bring this out in the open is for my constituents in Lanao del Norte to also see the possibilities that may be lost once we move forward and maybe, face the Bangsamoro because the Bangsamoro, if I am not mistaken, also carries the same autonomous powers. Science and technology will be an exclusive power of the Bangsamoro government, and what we may be losing is access to the P4.5-billion fund or P1.2-billion fund for livelihood, if we will not have a concurrence from our autonomous government.

Mme. Speaker, may I just have that confirmed.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, that is confirmed, Mme. Speaker, but as what we have been doing or what the Agency has been doing in the past, they can still assist in the ARMM even if they leave their own DOST. So, we can assist in the programs in terms of scholarships even if we already transitioned to the Bangsamoro Organic Law.

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

That is a very interesting point and I would like to have that clarified. The program that can be brought to an autonomous region is the scholarship program which is P4.5 billion. So, that still has a chance of being implemented inside an autonomous region. May I have this placed on record, Mme. Speaker.

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, yes, all of what we have mentioned a while ago, the P848 million of SMEs, the P4.5 billion of the scholarships, the livelihood of P400 million, and the R&D of P5.8 billion.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mme. Speaker, may I ask for a one-minute suspension of the session to concur some of my data with the honorable Sponsor.

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

*It was 4:22 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:28 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, again, may we

recognize the Hon. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo of the First District of Lanao del Norte to continue with his interpellation.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. DIMAPORO (M.). Mme. Speaker, upon suspension, the honorable Sponsor and the DOST family explained to me the mechanics of how to implement the DOST programs in an autonomous region, so that they will not lose from availing of the nice livelihood programs and scholarship funds that we are approving here in Congress. So, having said that, Mme. Speaker, I no longer have any question. My queries have been satisfied and I would like to thank the honorable Sponsor for his time.

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

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of the budget of the Department of Science and Technology.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

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

*It was 4:29 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:30 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### COMMISSION ON AUDIT

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 8169 and proceed with the budget of the Commission on Audit. We would like to recognize the Sponsor of the said

budget, the Hon. “Kuya” Jose Antonio R. Sy-Alvarado of the First District of Bulacan.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Honorable Sy-Alvarado is hereby recognized.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker and Majority Leader.

The budget under deliberation right now is that of the Commission on Audit. We are ready, Mme. Speaker, for any interpellation.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, before we call on the first interpellator, I would like to welcome and acknowledge the presence of the attendees from the Commission on Audit starting off with Chairperson Michael Aguinaldo, Commissioner Jose Fabia, Commissioner Roland Pondoc, Assistant Commissioner Elizabeth Zosa, Assistant Commissioner Susan Garcia, Assistant Commissioner Wilfredo Agito, Assistant Commissioner Carmela Perez, Assistant Commissioner Luz Tolentino, Assistant Commissioner Alexander Juliano and Assistant Commissioner Manolo Sy.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The honorable Chairperson, Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners, and other members of the Commission on Audit family are hereby welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, for her interpellation, I move that we recognize the Hon. France L. Castro of ACT TEACHERS Party-List.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. France Castro is recognized.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Maraming-maraming salamat, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

Will the Sponsor yield to some of my questions, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Of course, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, may I know, Mr. Sponsor, the budget of the COA in 2019 as compared to their budget in 2018.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, the budget of the Commission on Audit was P11,228,000,000 in 2018 while in 2019, it is P10,945,000,000.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, as I can see, the budget of the COA decreased by how many percent?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. By 2.51 percent, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Just a manifestation, Mme. Speaker, because personally, I am very happy with the performance of the COA for the past years because of the timely reports that were given to the different departments. However, there is only one question that I would like the COA, Mme. Speaker, to clarify. It is about Joint Circular No. 1, which the Civil Service Commission, the Department of Budget and Management, and the COA made. It is about the JOs and CoS of the government. So, nakalagay po dito sa COA na by the end of the year 2018, all these JOs and CoS will be retrenched. Am I right with my interpretation of Joint Circular No. 1, as far as the COA is concerned?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, sa parte po ng Commission on Audit, ang Commission on Audit po ay susunod sa Joint Circular No. 1, ngunit hindi po ina-advise o hindi po kagustuhan ng Commission on Audit na may mawalan ng trabaho dito sa Circular na ito; bagkus, nais po ng Commission on Audit na ang bawat isa po ay maging isang regular employee upang iyon pong kanilang dapat tinatamasang suweldo at patnubay mula sa ating gobyerno ay kanilang makamtan at mapakinabangan ng kanilang mga pamilya, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

Marami pong mga job order and contractual sa ating gobyerno, humigit-kumulang ito sa 200,000, at sinasabi po ng Department of Budget and Management na fi-fill up-an daw ito in 2019 at titingnan lang daw po nila doon iyong mga position na puwedeng tanggalin o puwedeng dagdagan, et cetera. So, involved ba iyong COA dito sa ginagawang inventory of the different positions in our government, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, ang Commission on Audit po ay naglalaan ng kanyang panahon para sa post-audit, kaya po ang nangangasiwa po ng solusyon upang iyong atin pong mga minamahal na kababayan na ngayon ay JO o contractual ay magkaroon ng permanent position o ng item ay ang DBM at ang Civil Service Commission.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you po, Mr. Sponsor.

So, naniniwala po ba iyong ating Commission on Audit na dapat dagdagan iyong mga posisyon or dapat fill up-an itong mga position na ito?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Naniniwala po, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. So, salamat po doon sa paninindigan po ng ating COA na dapat itong mga government employee natin na matagal na rin po naman na nanunungkulan sa gobyerno, itong mga contractual and JO na ito, dapat naman na mabigyan na sila ng mga regular position. So, ang dami po nito, at sana po, makatulong din ang Commission on Audit doon sa pagpapabago ng polisiya ng Department of Budget and Management tungkol sa pagha-hire ng mga agency, kasi po, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, halimbawa po sa Department of Education, marami pong mga position sa Department of Education, lalung-lalo na po iyong Salary Grade 1 hanggang 5, ang na-consider na agency-hired. Halimbawa po iyong mga clerk, iyong mga janitor, iyong mga driver, security guard or watchman na kailangang-kailangan sa mga eskuwelahan, pero ito po ay na-agency-hire. Baka puwedeng makuha natin, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, iyong commitment ng ating Commission on Audit ng tamang direksiyon sana dito sa pag-o-audit lalung-lalo na sa mga position natin sa government.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, ibinibigay po ng Commission on Audit ang kanilang, hindi lamang paninindigan, kundi ang kanilang oras upang mabigyan ng isang magandang buhay at pagkakataon ang ating mga kababayan. At tama po iyong sinabi ng ating minamahal na Party-List Representative mula sa ACT TEACHERS Party-List na si Cong. France Castro, ito po ay sinusuportahan ng Commission on Audit, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Puwede po ba akong makakuha ng written support kaugnay nito, iyong suporta natin dito sa mga JO and contract of service, kasi sinasabi ninyo naman po na kailangang mabigyan din ng mga regular position kung talagang pangangailangan ng mga ahensiya. So, puwede po bang makakuha ng written support or commitment iyong Representasyong ito sa Commission on Audit.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, maaari pong magbigay ang Commission on Audit. Hinihiling lamang po ng Commission on Audit na kayo po ay magkaroon ng liham sa Commission on Audit, ...

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. ... Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay, siges, gagawin po natin

iyang para po matugunan naman po iyong pangangailangan ng ating mga government employee para sa regular position na matagal na nilang hinahangad.

Kagaya nga po ng sinabi ko, inuulit ko, personally, nasisiyahan ako sa ginagawa ng Commission on Audit, lalo na sa timely reports at mga AOM na ibinibigay nila sa atin. Nakatutulong ito, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, para ma-analyze o makita natin kung ang budget na ibinibigay natin sa iba't ibang ahensya ng gobyerno ay nagagamit prudently at nagagamit ito nang maayos. Ito po ay mata-translate sa serbisyo natin sa ating mamamayan. Keep it up.

Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, for his interpellation, I move that we recognize the Hon. Antonio L. Tinio, also from the ACT TEACHERS Party-List.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. TINIO. Maraming salamat, Mme. Speaker.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. TINIO. Madam Speaker, may I ask for a suspension of the session.

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

*It was 4:41 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 4:41 p.m., the session is resumed.*

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

REP. TINIO. Maraming salamat, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, tumayo po ako rito ngayon upang magbigay ng pagpuri sa COA sa kanilang tapat na paggampan sa kanilang tungkulin sa pagbabantay sa pondong publiko o sa pondo ng taumbayan. Kung tayo sa Kongreso, tungkulin nating suriin ang budget na inihahapag ng Ehekutibo para sa susunod na taon, iyong tinatawag na power of the purse natin ay ang pagbigay ng authorization ng Kongreso para magastos ang pondo para sa susunod na taon, parang complementary naman

o bahagi ng isang buong proseso ang tungkulin ng COA bilang independent constitutional body. Sila naman, ang kanilang tungkulin ay bantayan kung paanong aktuwal na ginastos ng iba't ibang mga ahensya ang budget na inaprubahan ng Kongreso.

Katulad ng sinabi ko, nais ko pong magbigay ng saludo sa mga kasamahan natin sa COA dahil nga hindi naman sila nagkukulang sa paggampan ng tungkuling ito. Kahit sa kasalukuyang budget deliberation, naging mahalaga po ang mga COA audit report sa interpellation namin at ng mga kasamahan natin sa Kongreso sa iba't ibang mga ahensya ng gobyerno.

Kaya nga po nababahala ako sa ilang mga binitawang pahayag ni Pangulong Duterte mismo kamakailan na nagpapatungkol sa COA. Kung noong nakaraang taon, ang tinarget ni Pangulong Duterte ay ang Commission on Human Rights, talagang direktang pagbatikos, hindi lang sa Commission on Human Rights, pati mismo sa konsepto ng human rights. Kahit sa nakaraang SONA, may banat pa rin siya sa human rights, pero iyong pagbatikos na iyon, dito naman sa Kongreso, umabot pa sa punto na may tangka ang Kongresong ito na tanggalan ng budget ang Commission on Human Rights. Mabuti na lang at sa ngayon ay walang ganoong move para gawing zero ang budget ng COA.

Gayunpaman, ito nga iyong mga pahayag ni Pangulong Duterte recently. Pagkatapos lang ito noong nakaraang bagyo, partikular noong nasa Laoag si Pangulong Duterte, matapos ang typhoon Ompong, habang kaharap si Ilocos Norte Gov. Imee Marcos. Si Imee Marcos, mukhang may mga complaint, may mga hinaing sa COA dahil may inilabas na report ang COA na hindi pabor sa mga paggamit ng pondo ng Ilocos Norte government. Ang sinabi ni Pangulong Duterte dito according to news reports, "Sino ang taga-COA dito? Ihulog mo sa hagdanan para hindi maka-report." Tapos dagdag pa ng Pangulo, "Maniwala ka diyan COA na 'yan. You know, you just do it by Circular, and then they expect everybody to obey. Mga Circular, pakialam ko." Okay. These statements come from no less than the President of the Philippines.

Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor, tama po ba iyong mensahe na ipinararating ng Pangulo o tila may ipinararating ang Pangulo sa local officials at maging sa national government officials and all government employees? Tama nga ba na balewalain na lang ang mga Circular ng COA, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, ang mga Circular po ng Commission on Audit ay kasama sa mga batas ng ating lipunan at hindi ito maaaring balewalain, ngunit sa parte ng COA, naiintindihan rin po nila na kailangan nilang gawin ang kanilang trabaho na labas sa usaping pampulitika, kaya inilalayo ng Commission on Audit ang kanilang sarili pagdating sa usaping pampulitika upang walang

kakatigan at papanigan ang Commission on Audit, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. TINIO. Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, sa pahayag na iyan. Tama na bahagi ng mga batas ng Republika ang mga Circular ng COA, kaya maling-mali ang pahayag na ito kahit Pangulo pa ang nagsabi, pero hindi po maaaring sabihin na basta balewalain ang mga Circular ng COA. Ano ang masasabi ng mga kasamahan natin sa COA sa pahayag na ito? Itulak daw sa hagdanan iyong mga taga-COA?

*At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Garcia-Albano relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Sharon S. Garin.*

Ang pangamba ko po ay dahil sa Pangulo ng Pilipinas ang nagsabi nito, matatakot na ang mga kasamahan natin sa COA at hindi na nila magagampanan nang tapat ang kanilang tungkulin. They will be intimidated since the statement came from no less than the President of the Republic of the Philippines. Itulak daw kayo sa hagdanan. Baka naman pagkatapos nito ay maghinay-hinay na ang COA sa paglalabas ng mga audit report na maglalantad sa mga anomalya sa paggamit ng pondong publiko.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker.

REP. TINIO. Ganoon po ba ang mangyayari, Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, magiging tapat po sa mandato ng Konstitusyon at mananatili ang COA sa paglilingkod nito sa taumbayan. Kasabay na rin nito, iiwas ang COA na lumapit sa mga hagdanan, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. TINIO. Pag-iwas, tama po iyon, take all the necessary precautions, pero natutuwa ako na sa kabila ng intimidasyon, mga salitang marahas laban sa mga ordinaryong kapwa nating civil servants, servants of the public mula sa COA, panghahawakan pa rin nila—at least, mayroon tayong assurance na panghahawakan pa rin nila ang kanilang tungkulin.

Bakit po napakahalaga ng puntong ito? Dahil nga iyong insidenteng binabanggit natin, nagsumbong si Gov. Imee Marcos sa Presidente dahil nga mayroong para sa kanyang hindi magandang report na inilabas ng COA. Pamilyar po ako diyan dahil kami po ng mga kasamahan ko sa Makabayan ay nag-file ng Resolusyon na inimestigahan ng Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability ng Kapulungang ito at ongoing pa ang imbestigasyon, pero ang imbestigasyon ay nagpapatungkol sa mga ipinaabot ng tobacco farmers, mga magsasaka ng tobacco sa Ilocos Norte kaugnay sa

maling paggamit ng tobacco excise tax funds ng Ilocos Norte government from the years 2006 to 2016. Ito po iyong mga panahon na ang nakaupo bilang Governor ay si Imee Marcos o di kaya ang mga kamag-anak niya, na may panahon na si Keon, may panahon na si Bongbong Marcos na dating Senador ng Republika. Makikita iyan sa records ng ating House. Lumabas po ang napakaraming datos at impormasyon kaugnay sa mga kuwestiyunableng transaksyon sa paggamit ng tobacco excise tax. Pangunahin na rito ay ang paglabag sa mga COA Circular na nagbabawal sa cash advance at natalakay ito sa Komite, around P50-million worth of cash advances and so on with numerous transactions. Labas pa rito, ang COA mismo ay nakapaglabas ng findings, the highlights of which include, according to the COA, the fabrication of bid documents worth P21 million and doubtful purchases and deliveries worth P154 million. Iyan po ang mga nakapaloob sa COA report. Kaya po talagang kahindik-hindik iyong naging pagsumbong ni Gov. Imee Marcos kay Pangulong Duterte dahil ginawa lang ng COA ang kanilang trabaho, sinuri iyong kanyang mga transaksyon kaugnay sa tobacco excise tax at naglabas ng ganitong report. Ito ang isinumbong ni Imee Marcos kay Pangulong Duterte. Ang nakakalungkot ay kinampihan pa ni Pangulong Duterte ang Gobernador ng Ilocos Norte.

Iyon lang po ang gusto nating idiin. Natutuwa ako na may assurance mula sa ating Sponsor na sa kabila ng mga tangkang intimidation at harassment mula sa mga pinakamakapangyarihan sa kasalukuyang administrasyon, may commitment ang COA na patuloy na panghahawakan nila ang kanilang constitutional duty na tawagin natin bilang last line of defense, laban sa mga anomalya, laban sa korupsiyon, laban sa pangungurakot lalo na kung magmumula ito sa mga pinakamakapangyarihan sa ating lipunan.

With that, Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor, maraming salamat po. Magandang gabi.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you Honorable Tinio.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, for his interpellation, I move that we recognize the Hon. Ariel “Ka Ayik” B. Casilao from Party-List ANAKPAWIS.

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

The Honorable Casilao is recognized. Please proceed.

REP. CASILAO. Maraming salamat, Mme. Speaker.

Distinguished Sponsor, good afternoon. Just a few

questions. Gaya ng binanggit ng aking kasamahan sa Makabayan bloc, there was a threat or an intimidation, a very strong statement from the President. In line with COA's duty and mandate, of course, they face these threats among our government officials and, in fact, itong latest statement ni Presidente was a testament, in line with COA's duty, nakakaharap sila ng ganito. Ngayon, we filed several resolutions, not only on the tobacco excise tax, but including all others that we wanted to be investigated.

One in particular itong inimestigahan sa PSA with regard to the excessive allowance ng Philippine Statistics Authority. May I know kung ano ang naging status na nito? Ano ang naging findings?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, maaari po bang ipadala na lang ng COA sa inyo ang kanilang findings sa Lunes?

REP. CASILAO. Ano po ang status o proper action na ginawa na ng COA? Is a case being forwarded to the Ombudsman?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, it is still under review.

REP. CASILAO. Review, so wala pang...

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Kung kayo po ay magpapaunlak, kung maaari ay sa Lunes ibibigay sa inyo iyong...

REP. CASILAO. Now.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. ... ilan po sa findings, kasi masugid po ito at sinusuring maigi ng COA, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. This Representation, distinguished Sponsor, received information that COA officials or part of the members of COA are receiving threats because of this. May I know if there are measures being taken by COA to protect the life and limb of the members of the Commission on Audit? This question does not only apply to this particular case. Again, as I have started my interpellation, there is an indication of impunity even among the highest officials of the land.

I do not want to speculate nor be specific dahil alam nga natin na dahil sa ginagawang tungkulin ng mga taga-COA ay nalalagay sila sa sitwasyon na kapag nalalantad iyong mga ginagawang katiwalian ng mga opisyal ng gobyerno, bagama't hindi normal, hindi dapat tingnan na normal iyong abnormal na sitwasyon at reaksiyon ng mga iniinvestigahang mga opisyal ng ating gobyerno. Nagva-vary iyong

kanilang reaksiyon from harassment, intimidation, and even to the extent of violent attacks against the COA. May I know if there are measures now being taken.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, tuwing magkakaroon po ng intimidasyon sa parte po ng mga empleyado ng COA dahil sa kanilang mga findings, pinoproteksiyunan po kaagad ng Komisyon ang kanilang mga empleyado, pangkaraniwan po ay inililipat sila ng istasyon upang masigurado iyong safety at kasiguraduhan ng kanilang buhay, ngunit iyong ipinapalit po ay hindi umuurong sa kaniyang mandato sapagkat tapat po sa tungkulin ang Commission on Audit na makapagbigay ng tamang pagsusuri para sa ikabubuti po ng taumbayan, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. As a matter of policy, is there an existing circular or interagency cooperation between the COA and the law enforcement agency in times of securing or with regard to security of COA officials, investigators. Is there a memorandum circular or a MOA with the law enforcement agencies?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, there is a MOA with the NBI, with the National Bureau of Investigation, to sort out this kind of problems for the Commission on Audit. Hindi po ito tinutulugan ng Commission on Audit at kasama na po sa pagbibigay ng tamang pagsusuri iyong pagbibigay ng proteksiyon at lakas ng loob sa lahat po ng empleyado ng Commission on Audit, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Salamat at hihingi na lang po ang Kinatawang ito ng kopya na iyan para maging bahagi tayo sa mga Representante ng Kongreso na maging katuwang ng COA sa pagpapatupad ng kanilang tungkulin.

Maraming salamat.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, sa Lunes po ay maibibigay po sa minamahal nating Kongresista "Ka Ayik" Casilao ng Party-List ANAKPAWIS iyong kaniyang hinihinging kopya, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, distinguished sponsor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garin, S.). Thank you, Honorable Casilao.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, for his

interpellation, I move to recognize the honorable Minority Leader Danilo E. Suarez of the Third District of Quezon.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Honorable Suarez is recognized. Please proceed.

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

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Can I just be given an explanation about procedural. If the Commission on Audit finds some what we called “procedural defect,” what are the steps being taken, say, violation of certain ordinance on procurement, et cetera?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, nag-uumpisa po ito—kung mayroon pong makitang iregularidad ang Commission on Audit sa kanilang mga bagay na sinusuri sa ating gobyerno, sila po ay nagbibigay kaagad ng audit observation. Pagkatapos po ng audit observation at napatunayan po na mayroon talagang iregularidad sa nangyari, ito man ay bidding, procurement at iba pang pangyayari sa ating gobyerno, sila po ay nagre-release ng Notice of Disallowance, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Okay, that was my next question. So, lumabas na iyong Notice of Disallowance. What will be the next step?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, pagkatapos po ng Notice of Disallowance, binibigyan po ng due process upang umapela iyong mga personalidad na sangkot sa Notice of Disallowance. Maaari po silang makipag-ugnayan sa kani-kanilang mga Director at kung hindi po sila magkasundo o kung hindi maresolusyunan at maresolba iyong kanilang problema, puwede po silang umapela mismo sa Central Office ng Commission on Audit, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. So, what will be the court of last resort in case of issuance of the Notice of Disallowance, Your Honor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, ang court of last resort po ay ang Korte Suprema po ng ating bansa.

REP. SUAREZ. Mayroon na ho ba tayong mga cases like that na naka-file na po sa Supreme Court, na nagmatigas ang COA na sinabing “iyong ginawa mo ay violation of certain procedure,” nag-appeal po iyong may kaso and then nasa Supreme Court na?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, we have an average of 15 Supreme Court cases per year.

REP. SUAREZ. How many?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Fifteen, 1-5 po.

REP. SUAREZ. 1-5?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Labinlima, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Dumadaan pa rin po ba ito sa Court of Appeals at saka mga RTC o hindi na?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, hindi na po dumadaan ito sa RTC at Court of Appeals. Diretso na po ito sa court of last resort natin sa Supreme Court, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Is that a policy or is it within the law?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, ito po ay nakasaad sa Rules of Court at saka sa Administrative Code ng Pilipinas, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. So, iyong long litigation or judicial procedure naiti-shortcut iyan because of this provision.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Opo, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. So, iyong mga may mga intensyon na gumawa ng hindi tama does not have the privilege, luxury and comfort of a long litigation—Supreme Court kaagad.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Tama po, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. Sa matagal na panahon—ilang taon na po ba ang ating Chairman sa COA?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Three-and-a-half years, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. SUAREZ. May napanalunan na ba tayong kaso?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, 85 to 95 percent po ng mga kaso ng Commission on

Audit ay naipapanalo po ng Komisyong ito sa Korte Suprema, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor.

*At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Garin (S.) relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Mylene J. Garcia-Albano.*

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, thank you, distinguished Sponsor, for your reply to some of the questions that this Representation raised.

On behalf of the Minority, we do not have any more question to raise on the proposed budget of the Commission on Audit.

I so move.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the ...

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, on the part of the Minority, we move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Commission on Audit.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Commission on Audit.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Commission on Audit is terminated.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

*It was 5:10 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:12 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND ECHNOLOGY  
*Continuation*

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration on the budget of the Department of Science and Technology or DOST, and may we recognize again the Hon. Seth Frederick P. Jalosjos of the First District of Zamboanga del Norte ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Honorable Jalosjos ...

REP. ORTEGA. (V.). ...for his sponsorship.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). ...is hereby recognized.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, may we recognize the Honorable France Castro of ACT TEACHERS Party-List for her interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. France L. Castro is hereby recognized.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Maraming salamat. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

So, would the honorable Sponsor yield to some of my clarificatory questions?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Ilang mga obserbasyon lang po, Mme. Speaker, dito sa budget ng Department of Science and Technology. So, mula sa budget na P4,941,281,000, naging P5,026,445,000. Ang pagbaba po ay medyo hindi naman significant, mga 1.72 percent. Tama po ba ito, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, tama po iyon.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). By the way, Mme. Sponsor, puwede po bang mabigyan ng edukasyon ang Representasyong ito. Ano po ba iyong pangunahing mga gawain ng ating DOST sa gobyerno? Ano po ba iyong mga pangunahing functions nito? Kabilang po ba rito iyong pagpapaunlad ng ating mga siyentipiko, para mapaunlad ng ating scientific findings and technology? Tama po ba ako, ito iyong pangunahin?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, tama po kayo.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, Mme. Speaker, kung

tutuusin, ano, kung talagang seryoso ang gobyerno para mapaunlad iyong siyensiya, kulang ito, hindi ba? Kulang pa itong budget na P5,026,000,445? Though tumaas siya nang konti, pero mukhang hindi ito sasapat doon sa napakahalagang function ng DOST. Tama po ba ako, good Sponsor?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, you are correct, Mme. Speaker, pero that will be based on the absorption capacity ng Ahensiya po. Kaya po, although, kulang po, iyon lang po siguro ang makakayanan natin within the timeframe na ibinigay sa ating Ahensiya.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Salamat po. Siguro ang unang tanong ko po ay iyong tungkol doon sa budget ninyo on programs. Naalala ko noong college ako sa Philippine Normal University, mayroon tayong tinatawag na mga DOST scholars. So, nagpapatuloy pa po ba ito at nasaan ito dito sa budget natin?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, tuluy-tuloy po ang programa natin for the scholarship. Iyon po iyong P4.5-billion budget allocated for our scholarship programs sa DOST.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Four point five billion?

REP. JALOSJOS. Four point five billion po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. So, ito pong P4.5 billion—naalala ko po ito—ito pong programang ito ng DOST na nagbibigay ng scholarship sa ating mga deserving students na ang kurso ay may kinalaman sa Mathematics and Science, tama po ba?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes po, Mme. Speaker. A total of 33,000 po ang scholars under this program, 27,000 undergraduates, 4,000 MS, and 2,000 PhD.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Puwede po bang mabigyan ang Kinatawag ito noong statistics as regards doon sa mga statistics natin kung saan napunta itong mga scholars na ito?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay, marami pong salamat. Kaugnay din po dito sa scholarship na ito at pagsusuporta natin sa mga estudyante, mahalaga din ito, ano. Kabilang po ba sa programa iyong return of service? Nagkakaroon din ng return-of-service policy ang DOST kaugnay nito?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes po, Mme. Speaker. Actually, one is to one po ang return of service natin po.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Ano po ang ibig sabihin ng one is to one?

REP. JALOSJOS. One-year service in the country for every scholarship.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Ah, okay. So, ...

REP. JALOSJOS. Every year, one is to one.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). ...kung apat na taon po siya na binigyan ng scholarship, apat na taon na magkakaroon ng return of service?

REP. JALOSJOS. Opo.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. So, napansin ko po dito sa inyong MOOE. Mayroon ditong Financial Assistance and Subsidies na P3,962,000,799. Ano po ba ito?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, iyon po iyong mga grants and aid na ibinibigay sa mga research or R&D ng universities.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Ah, okay. So, nagbibigay din pala tayo ng subsidy para doon sa research and evaluation ng mga—saan-saan po ito? Puwede ninyo po ba akong bigyan ng kopya ng mga listahan nitong mga eskwelahan na kung saan ibinibigay natin iyong grants, Mme. Speaker?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker. Hindi lang po eskwelahan iyong listahan na ibibigay po namin, pati iyong ibang institution or other government agencies, ...

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay.

REP. JALOSJOS. ...bibigyan po namin ng kopya, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, iyong huli ko pong mga katanungan ay may kinalaman po doon sa mga program in regional and countryside development. Puwede po bang ma-educate ang Representasyong ito kaugnay nito? Iyong una po iyong Diffusion and Transfer of Knowledge and Technologies, and Other Related Projects and Activities. Ito po ba iyong tinutukoy ninyo na popondohan dito o iba pa po ito sa Financial Assistance and Subsidies?

REP. JALOSJOS. Iyon pong itinutukoy ninyo, Mme. Speaker, iyon po iyong small-medium enterprise na P848 million po ang naka-allocate para sa programa diyang sa technology interventions.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, ito po iyong may kinalaman doon sa iba't ibang—please correct me if I am wrong, mga inventions at technologies na Itina-transfer natin sa mga—ano po ang mga beneficiaries natin dito?

REP. JALOSJOS. Ito po iyong existing companies na gustong mag-upgrade ng research at quality of services na puwede nilang makuha through the help or the assistance ng ating SME program, totalling around P848 million, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you very much, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker.

Ito pong “Establishment of Quezon Provincial Science and Technology Center and GIS Hub for DRRM and Climate Change,” so napansin po natin dito na mukhang ang budget ay hindi gumalaw, from P5 billion pa rin iyong budget, ah P5 million. Puwede po ba ninyo akong bigyan ng brief description nitong project na ito?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, can you please clarify, Quezon province or Quezon?

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Establishment of Quezon Provincial S&T Center and GIS Hub for DRRM and Climate Change.

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, ang tanong po natin ay kung bakit hindi po natin na-utilize ang pondo?

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Ang tanong ko po ay brief description lang po nitong program na ito. Paano po ito nakakatulong sa atin?

REP. JALOSJOS. Ito po ay in the form of a building and up to now, I think, ay nasa bidding—S&T Center po ng Quezon. Nasa bidding na po kaya po hindi po nagagalaw iyong pondo intended for that.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, hindi po nagagalaw. Ibig sabihin ay hindi pa siya na-utilize?

REP. JALOSJOS. Wala pang nananalo sa bidding. It is still under the procurement process po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Ito pong technology and testing service laboratory, completion of Capiz Provincial S&T, mayroon din palang ganoong project doon sa Capiz. Is it the same ba doon sa Quezon, parehas lang po?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes po. Ang diperensiya lang po ay iyong sa Quezon is an office at iyong sa Capiz po ay laboratoryo.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay.

REP. JALOSJOS. Pero pareho po ang method at pareho po ang scenario o ang problema, which is not really a problem, Mme. Speaker, but it is a matter of procurement.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Pero ang problema po nito, Mme. Speaker, ay katulad din doon sa Quezon kasi mukhang from 2018 budget – P5 million, so pagdating ng 2019 ay wala na siya, hindi na siya inilagay.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, dapat it should be completed by then.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Naniniwala po, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, ang Representasyong ito na mahalaga ang science and technology, research, at invention para po mapaunlad natin iyong lahat ng part ng ating ekonomiya at ng ating bansa.

Iyong last na po, ang atin po bang Department of Science and Technology ay nagve-venture po ba doon sa tinatawag nating “national industrialization”? Kasi alam po natin iyong kahalagahan ng teknolohiya, mga researches, at mga inventions. Ito po ay mga mahahalagang factor para po doon sa pagsulong noong ating national industrialization. Alam ko mayroong mga nabanggit ang ating Pangulo kaugnay nito. So ano po ba, parang wala akong nakikita sa plano kung paano po ba? Mayroon po bang, halimbawa, roadmap ang ating Department of Science and Technology para po mapaunlad iyong ating mga teknolohiya para po doon sa national industrialization? Halimbawa po, tayo ay mayaman sa mga minerals, hindi po ba, Mr. Sponsor? Mayaman tayo sa mga minerals pero mukhang hindi naman din natin fully nayu-utilize itong mga minerals na ito. Mayroon din po bang ganoong plano o mayroon din bang ganoong project ang Department of Science and Technology?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, sinusundan po natin ang ahensya ng DTI and DA roadmaps, so mayroon po tayong direksyon, and doon po sa unang tanong, Mme. Speaker, tuluy-tuloy po ang pag-enhance natin ng teknolohiya in support of our scholars—our different technologies para maging at par doon sa industrialization question ninyo, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Oo, pero ikinalulungkot ko, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, base doon sa mga ilang engagement natin, halimbawa sa DTI at saka sa NEDA, parang wala pa ring malinaw na industriya na talaga ang sasagot doon sa mga pangangailangan natin para ipagpatuloy at para magkaroon tayo ng national industrialization.

Sana ay mabigyan tayo ng commitment ng ating Department of Science and Technology na maging

agresibo para mas lalo pa nating mapaunlad ang ating teknolohiya at magbigay ng initiative din ang ating DOST kaugnay noong ating national industrialization.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, within the mandate, the Agency is doing its best to fulfill iyong responsibilidad at ang mandato ng ahensya para maitupad natin ang national industrialization.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Ito lang po, Mme. Speaker, good Sponsor, salamat po.

REP. JALOSJOS. Salamat po, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ROAQ-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, I move to recognize the Hon. Salvador “Bong” B. Belaro, Jr. of 1-ANG EDUKASYON for his interpellation.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The Hon. Bong Belaro is recognized.

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, this Representation will no longer be fielding questions, but instead would be making three manifestations and, in the alternative, would like to request the good Sponsor to lend him a few minutes for these manifestations.

REP. JALOSJOS. Of course, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BELARO. Mme. Speaker, my first manifestation relates to research. This Representation is coming from the vantage point of having sponsored various research bills which are pending in Congress. One of them is the promotion of research culture, and the other one is the integration of academic to industry linkages and the provision of tax incentives to research.

My first manifestation I would like to relate to the General Provisions of the NEP and this is also the same provision, Section 30 is the one that I am referring to, also present in the previous GAA, and if I may read in toto the provision. Mme. Speaker, this is the entirety of the provision as appearing in the NEP and the previous GAA, Section 30, reads as follows:

Harmonized National Research and Development Agenda. All government agencies shall align their research and development agenda programs under the Harmonized National Research and Development Agenda for funding amounting to Ten Million Pesos (P10,000,000) and above, x x x.

This is the important provision, the following paragraph, which provides:

The DOST, in coordination with government research institutions and other agencies, shall facilitate, and the word is “facilitate” dissemination of all again, the word is “all output programs and projects” under the Harmonized National Research and Development Agenda to appropriate government agencies, local government units, academe, industry, and communities, whenever applicable.

While this Representation, Mme. Speaker, is predisposed to asking the good Department for their compliance with this provision, I believe that the best manifestation of the lack of coordination is the fact that we do not see our research work in schools, in academe, in private entities, being translated into something useful for the good of the country, for the development, not only of our economic aspirations, but also of general societal goals.

Mme. Speaker, let me tell you a story, and this story is something, in fact, very common, because every year, students in the universities and colleges all over the country churn out not only thousands but millions of researches. Faculty members also do their thing. Similarly, they come out with researches. Again, government agencies come out with various research outputs, actual research, but the question is, Mme. Speaker, what happens to these researches? What I know is that, we were surprised, that very often, in other parts of the world, the researches of our scientists and researchers are recognized. It is an urban legend that the inventor of the fluorescent lamp gained inspiration from a Filipino mind, and many other stories.

The problem with research in this country is that there is no coordination with the academe and industry. Kaya nga po itong provision na ito, I would like to call the attention of the good Department that they be very conscious and be responsive to this mandate because they are the lead agency in promoting research in this country.

Now, Mme. Speaker, let me again tell you a more personal story. Not so long ago, this Representation won the National Science Research Award for Outstanding Youth Scientist. This Representation won the school level, the provincial level, the regional level, and the national level. We were three and, as a matter of fact, this Representation was awarded as a National Outstanding Scientist by the DOST. That was because my adviser was very good. He was very good in conceptualizing that research. It was about a local plant, the “makabuhay” plant. A few years after, I went to my alma mater, the Partido State University, formerly Partido National High

School, and asked my class adviser about my research. As expected, I discovered the product of my research in the library, in one of the darkest corners of the library, gathering dust and cobwebs, and perhaps, the termites and the rats are all there.

Mme. Speaker, this is the sorry state of our research. While we, as citizens, are capable of producing world-class researches, there is not much that you can say about translating all these output into something useful for national developmental goals. Another one, there is always a problem about intellectual property protection. That is why—that is the context of my—Mme. Speaker, this is a personal thing and personal advocacy of our Party-list, that the good Department be requested to be very sensitive, because this would make the difference in our country.

Look at China. China acts on researches to lift further development. We have so much advantage over the Chinese. We are very good in English and, yet, we are kaput in terms of this dimension. So, that is the first manifestation, Mme. Speaker.

The second manifestation, Mme. Speaker, relates to the budget. It appears that for the past three years, 2017, 2018 and 2019, it may not be that much but there is a significant increase in the budget of the DOST. In 2017, it is P4,505,197,000. It increased slightly in 2018 to P4,901,174,000, and in 2019, P4,992,119,000.

What this Representation, Mme. Speaker, would like to point out is that, in 2017, which is the completed budget here, they still have an unreleased allotment of P74,346,000. Marami pong mga puwedeng magawa ang pondong ito, in terms of research, in terms of development, and in terms of harmonizing the research outputs of all our institutions, of the 119 State Colleges and Universities, as well as of the agencies of the government. Baka po puwede nating tingan ito.

The third manifestation, Mme. Speaker, is that, this Representation, despite this I would suppose oversight in the utilization of the budget, still does not lose hope and I am still pinning hope, Mme. Speaker, on the capacity of the Department to assert its rightful role in seeing to it that sooner or later, we can convert ourselves in the knowledge of economy because progress should be anchored on research in the first place.

Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker. Likewise, this Representation would like to thank the good Sponsor for lending an ear. Thank you very much.

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

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, we recognize the Hon. Aniceto “John” D. Bertiz III of ACTS-OFW Party-List.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. BERTIZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, Mme. Majority Leader, and honorable Sponsor.

Wala naman po akong katanungan para sa inyong budget. Actually nga po ay isa po ako sa sumusuporta sa DOST dahil sa itong mga nakaraang taon ay naramdaman po ng aming sektor ng OFWs ang mga importanteng proyekto at programa ng DOST.

Mayroon pong, natatandaan ko during their anniversary, na-feature iyong ilang mga kasama naming mga OFW. Iyong isa po ay dating chef, ngayon po ay isa siya sa nagmamay-ari ng isa sa pinakamalaking food processing ng mga tocino at longganisa. Dahil po sa tulong ng DOST, iyong dati niyang manual ng paggawa ng mga food products ay ngayon po ay automated na, and DOST—this Representation, as the lone Representative of the OFWs really expresses gratitude for the good leadership of our Secretary of the DOST. And then, iyong isa po na dati pong civil engineer ay isa na rin po sa may pinakamalaking business automation factories dito sa ating bansa. Ang dati rin pong seaman na upholsterer ng isang barko ay world-class provider or supplier na rin po ng mga fine print furniture. Ito po ay dahil sa programa at tulong po ng DOST.

Ang aking katanungan po, honorable Speaker and honorable Sponsor, ano po ba ang programa, ito po ba ay sila lamang ang lumapit or mayroon po ba talagang programa ang DOST para sa ating mga bagong bayani?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, yes po. Actually, tuluy-tuloy po iyong programa ng ating Ahensiya, ng DOST. In fact, that is why I would like to even go further by explaining doon sa ARMM concern ng isang Congressman kanina na ang binabanggit na zero po ay iyong pondo sa GAA, let me po explain, ito po iyong mga direct beneficiaries o ang mga lumalapit pong direkta sa Office of the Secretary at sa ahensiya na nabibigyan po sila ng tulong kapag lumapit. Since national coverage po ang mga programa ng ating ahensiya, lahat po ng lumalapit ay binibigyan or nabibigyan po ng tulong in terms of either funding or technical support po. Doon po sa katanungan ng ating, Mme. Speaker, kung—sa mga OFWs natin ay tuluy-tuloy pa rin po na nagbibigay ng pondo, nagbibigay ng technical support, at researches para mapabuti ang buhay nila kapag nakabalik dito sa Pilipinas.

REP. BERTIZ. Salamat po, honorable Sponsor.

Noong nakaraan po kasi ay naging panauhin namin ang honorable Secretary of DOST at mayroon pong nabanggit na programa ang DOST kung saan ay puwedeng lumapit ang isang OFW sa DOST at ito ay mabibigyan ng tinatawag na loan or start-up livelihood

program or kung sila man ay may expertise na puwede pong suportahan in terms of funding and machineries or equipment. Ano po ba itong programang ito, honorable Sponsor?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

Actually, covered na po sila sa Small and Medium Enterprise Program ng DOST. Although, iyong programa yata na binabanggit ni Hon. Aniceto John Bertiz is iyong programa under DTI, pero covered pa rin po, Mme. Speaker, under the Small and Medium Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program or SETUP ng DOST itong programa na binabanggit po natin, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BERTIZ. Napakaimportante rin po kasi na ito ay paglaanan ng pondo lalung-lalo na po para sa ang ating mga OFW. Natatandaan ko po, Mme. Speaker, honorable Sponsor, during my time as an OFW, ang Malaysia, Singapore at ganoon na rin po ang South Korea ay kasabay po naming mga nagtatrabaho. Kami po ay nasa opisina at sila po iyong mga hard, iyong tinatawag nating mga physical workers or mga construction workers. Pero dahil na rin po sa equivalent department tulad ng DOST, ang Malaysia, South Korea at ganoon na rin po ang Singapore and other Asian countries ay ni-recall ang aming mga kasamahan na mga galing doon sa bansa na iyon upang ang kanilang bansa ay makapagtatag ng isang tinatawag na programa upang alamin kung ano ba iyong mga oportunidad doon sa bansang pinagtatrabahuhan namin tulad ng Saudi Arabia.

After seven years of our stay in Saudi Arabia, all those nationalities were recalled by their own countries, but a few years later, they all came back to the same countries but they were no longer construction workers or iyong tinatawag na OFW, ngunit nasa likod nila, kasama at suportado sila mismo ng kanilang gobyerno, at sila na po ang mga contractor, at ito na po ang Hyundai Corporation, nandiyan po iyong Samsung technology at nandiyan na rin po at iba't iba pang malalaking construction companies na sila na mismo ang humahawak ng kontrata. Ang atin pong programa ng Overseas Filipino Program or iyong Overseas Employment Program ng ating bansa ay more than 45 years na, pero hanggang sa ngayon po, tayo pa rin po ay mga OFW or manggagawa. Ano po ba ang puwede or ito na ba ang panahon para magising din ang DOST at tularan nito iyong mga bansang iyon na sila na po mismo ang lumalahok at sumusuporta sa ating human resources para hindi lamang po maging trabahador ngunit tayo na rin po iyong mga mismong humahawak at nagpapakabo ng proyekto?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

Actually, I was just informed by the Secretary at ng ahensyang ito, at nakatutuwa po na this coming

2019, mayroon po tayong binubuo na bagong programa solely earmarked and focused prioritizing all our OFW brothers and sisters sa iba't ibang lugar ng mundo pagbalik nila. So, tama po. Naniniwala po ang ahensya na dapat talagang tutukan at bigyang pansin ang mga kapatid nating mga OFW, and through this new program po, mabibigyan na po ng lunas or aksyon ang mga OFW na babalik po dito on this new program sa 2019 po.

REP. BERTIZ. Maraming salamat po.

Sana po ito ay isa sa mga kasagutan sa sinasabi mismo ng ating Presidente na darating ang panahon na tayo o ang mga Pilipino ay hindi na kinakailangan pang mangibang-bayan para magtrabaho dahil sa kawalan ng oportunidad at trabaho dito, ngunit it will be just a matter of choice or travel, as form of tourism or education.

Isa po ang DOST na dapat po ay manguna sa pag-harness ng ating mga bayani or mga bagong bayani na kung saan, sila po mismo ang tumulong or maging kasangkapan para magkaroon ng progresong mga bansa lalung-lalo na po sa Middle East, sa America, at sa Europe.

Iyon lamang po at sana ay bigyan din po kami ng inyong immediate long-term plan and proposal lalung-lalo na po sa sektor ng mga overseas Filipino workers na nag-i-infuse ng US\$37 billion annually sa ating ekonomiya.

Iyon lamang po, Mme. Speaker, honorable Sponsor.

Maraming salamat po.

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

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, may we recognize the Hon. Danilo "Danny" E. Suarez from the Third District of Quezon for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). The honorable Minority Leader Danny Suarez is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

Is the distinguished Sponsor willing to yield to some questions?

What is the percentage of DOST's budget compared to the GDP?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, total budget po ng DOST?

REP. SUAREZ. No. Normally kasi sa mga developed nation, Your Honor, ang budget po ng research and development, katulad po nitong ating ahensya, Science and DOST, normally 3.5 percent ng

GDP ay inilalagay nila sa departamentong ito. Kaya ang tanong ko po, magkano po ang inilalagay ng ating pamahalaan na budget ng DOST as compared to our GDP?

REP. JALOSJOS. 0.1 percent po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, 0.1 percent, contrast doon sa world standard na 3.5 percent?

REP. JALOSJOS. 0.1 lang po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Kaya ...

REP. JALOSJOS. You are correct.

REP. SUAREZ. So, ang diperensya po ay 3.4?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, you are correct, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Medyo malaki ang diperensya po ano, Your Honor. So, are we not supposed to be alarmed by the fact that this administration is not giving serious concern on the importance of this Agency?

REP. JALOSJOS. Binigyan po ng increase ang Ahensya, Mme. Speaker, but we have—the Agency has been trying its best, pero ganoon po talaga iyong—hanggang ganon lang po talaga iyong utilization.

REP. SUAREZ. Well, I am looking at their presented papers, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, and there is R&D for agriculture, and something that is very close to my heart, the improvement of coconut varieties. Can we be oriented on what is the rationale behind this program and what is the status right now?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mayroon pang programa para po, Mme. Speaker, for the coconut industry, ang tawag po natin ay coconut tissue culture—for every nut, 200 po iyong makukuha nating plant particles, planting materials. So, in a small coverage of land, mas marami pong output ng planting materials ang puwede nating makuha galing sa punuan ng coconut.

REP. SUAREZ. Are we talking here of a variety of coconut that is not yet developed by the Philippine Coconut Authority or are they working hand in hand with the PCA on this particular program?

REP. JALOSJOS. Developed na po, Mme. Speaker.

Let me reiterate, for every coconut, it used to be one-is-to-one po ang napo-produce. Ngayon po, with this new technology and research na nagawa ng ating

Ahensya, it is one-is-to-200 ang planting materials po ang napo-produce from one coconut tree. Ito po ay closely coordinated ng PCA, nagbibigay ng information and sapat na tulong para makakuha tayo ng ...

REP. SUAREZ. So, Your Honor, pagdating po ng deliberation ng budget ng Agriculture at PCA, can I raise this issue?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Iyong variety na sinasabi po ninyo, ilang taon ito bago mamunga?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, a little over one year before puwede na siyang i-plant.

REP. SUAREZ. Pagkatanim po ninyo noong kanilang variety ay ilang taon?

REP. JALOSJOS. From tissue po, Mme. Speaker, to planting material, one year ang time, pero iyong pamumunga po, ganoon din po, pare-pareho lang po.

REP. SUAREZ. Kagaya ng ibang variety, mga five years?

REP. JALOSJOS. Pareho po, six, five years po.

REP. SUAREZ. Five years din po?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, kung mamumunga po iyan ng five years, kayo ho naman, distinguished Sponsor, galing din kayo sa lugar na maraming niyog, di po ba, sa Zamboanga?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes po.

REP. SUAREZ. Eh, we sacrifice the lifespan of the coconut, tama po ba iyon? Mas mabilis bumunga, maiksi naman ang buhay. Hindi ho katulad noong ating standard variety na ginagamit, seven years pero tumatagal po ng mga 60 to 70 years ang productivity. So, is that the tradeoff that we are talking here, two years difference?

REP. JALOSJOS. May I correct, Mme. Speaker. Actually, 30 years pa rin po ang span na pinag-usapan natin, although, iyong growing ng plant material natin will take as regular din po, mga five to six years ang growth.

REP. SUAREZ. Do you have this copy, Your Honor? Can you go to transport and mobility, Hybrid

Trimaran fast craft passenger cargo, and Severe Weather Amphibious Navigator (SWAN), both and then the locally developed and built hybrid electric train for the Philippine National Railway? Ano ho ang status nito, these are very noble projects?

REP. JALOSJOS. Iyong sa PNR, Mme. Speaker, tapos na po iyong testing and we are expecting by December, puwede na pong ma-adopt ng PNR po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Ito hong mga train na ito, will these coaches be deployed sa Philippine National Railway?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, yes, Mme. Speaker, that is correct.

REP. SUAREZ. Hindi na ho tayo gagamit ng choo-choo train, choo-choo, ganoon, wala ho noon? Electric, wala nang sound, dire-diretso lang. Mawawala na po iyong choo-choo train.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, po, although nag-choo-choo-choo pa rin po daw.

REP. SUAREZ. Choo-choo pa rin?

REP. JALOSJOS. Nag-choo-choo pa rin daw po ang train na ito although electric na daw po siya, and this is probably a hybrid-type of train and we are very proud for it to be Filipino-made and a product of DOST.

REP. SUAREZ. Kasi lumaki po ako sa train, Your Honor, and ang choo-choo train po needs momentum, di ho ba? Iinitin mo muna, you burn coal, tapos you develop the steam and it propels the wheel to start to spin, at ang mover po niyan ay nasa dulo lang, di ho ba, Your Honor? Nasa dulo lang, wala ho naman tayong makina sa likod, hinihila lang iyan. So, ang sinasabi ninyo, Your Honor, ay naka-develop sila ng train, dine-develop nila, hybrid, kaya siguro sinabi nilang hybrid, puwedeng train, electric, puwede ring diesel. Am I correct there?

REP. JALOSJOS. That is correct, Mme. Speaker, hybrid po siya, so it is a combination of mechanical engine and electric.

REP. SUAREZ. Ito ho namang Severe Weather Amphibious Navigator, ito ho ay nasa drawing board pa o existing na?

REP. JALOSJOS. Iyong train po, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SUAREZ. Iyong Amphibious Navigator,

tamang-tama ito. Ito ho ba iyong concept nila ay kahit sa baha, tatakbo ho ito sa ...

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, to answer that question, it is still under testing and development. Ah, it is under development, so pinapag-aralan pa po ang posibilidad na ma-produce na po siya, but it is already under research at gagawa na lang po ng aktwal na ...

REP. SUAREZ. Itong hybrid trimaran, drawing pa rin ho ito, nasa design pa rin tayo, Your Honor.

REP. JALOSJOS. Nasa research pa po, Mme. Speaker, itong Severe Weather Amphibious Navigator—ay, iyong trimaran po.

REP. SUAREZ. Your Honor, sa amin pong lalawigan, nagbukas po kami ng Quezon Science High School. I do not know kung nakarating ito sa DOST. Ang ginawa po ng aming Governor doon, the best and the brightest of each municipality ay kinukuha ho namin at pinag-aaral, but the qualification is kailangan po ay marginal iyong bata but magaling. And kuwan ho, pagpasok po ng mga bata, mga mapuputla at saka mga nakaluwa ang mata. After two months, mapupula na po ang kanilang mga pisngi at saka matataba na. This is just to show you what proper hygiene and proper nutrition can do to a student. I hope you can do that nationwide but, of course, we are subjected to the availability of funds.

Ngayon po, iyong aming school sa Quezon, the Quezon Science High School, ay lumaki na ho ang population. As a matter of fact, iyong una naming graduate will be a candidate for scholarship sa UP and rank number one iyon pong aming graduate doon. So, can we have a tactical alliance with this Department, take a look and find out on what more improvement they can suggest. Sayang po kasi iyong material time because I am pretty sure, considering that they are an expert in science and technology, and the theme of the school was Quezon Science High School, baka ho makatulong sila. So, on the proposed budget of 2019, this Representation would like to take a look that there is a line item there supporting the growth of this particular school, distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker. Can I be assured na isasama po ninyo iyan?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes po, Mme. Speaker, we are assured that the Agency will, ilalagay po nila under the regional budget.

REP. SUAREZ. Can I go into another subject, PAGASA, is PAGASA here, Your Honor? Two years ago, because we did not do much questioning during last year's budget, there are still blind spots in terms of

entry of tropical storms and low pressure area. That was two years ago. How covered are we now?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, two years ago, we were around 85 percent covered and ngayon po, nasa 90 na po tayo and, in fact ...

REP. SUAREZ. 90?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes po. We have ...

REP. SUAREZ. So, may 10 percent pa kayong blind spot.

REP. JALOSJOS. May apat na lang po ang i-establish na ...

REP. SUAREZ. But you are turning to modernize, is that correct?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Are we talking here of dopplers?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, you are correct, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Do your dopplers have rain precipitator? You can predict rain as well.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. Do you communicate with Japan Meteorological Agency services, because normally, iyan po ang pinanggagalingan? How about Australia, Mme. Speaker?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SUAREZ. So, iyong disturbance po noon naii-program na kaagad ninyo with the prediction of maybe two to three days ahead, ganoon ho ba?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes po. Up to five days pa po, nakukuha na po natin sa bagong mga radars na na-put up.

REP. SUAREZ. So hindi na ho tayo magkakaroon ng issue? Nangyayari po kasi iyan noong bata pa ako na basta na lang babagyo and our weather prediction forecasting system was really bad but now we can comfortably say to our countrymen na we are up-to-date in terms of forecasting weather disturbance.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker, we are confident. In fact, naipakita na po ng Ahensya ang kapabilidad ng radars natin during Ompong. In fact,

seven days before, a week before, nalaman na po natin na parating na po ito at malaking klaseng bagyo ang dumating. This resulted in a lot of—we believe it is life-saving in terms of forecasts and warnings.

REP. SUAREZ. Several years ago, Mme. Speake, the Americans, you know, they were also subjected to some weather disturbance. They call them “hurricanes”; unlike us, we call them “typhoons.” They conceptualized exploding a nuclear bomb in the eye of a hurricane. What happened to that?

REP. JALOSJOS. Mme. Speaker, hindi pa...

REP. SUAREZ. If I may just, nabasa ko ho ito several years ago, matagal na ho ito na nakita ho natin ang disastrous effect nito. Not even a modern country can do something about the weather. Talaga po namang we can consider weather as the lethal serial killer of this world—weather, nature. Wala ho tayong magagawa diyari. So, ang sabi po noong ibang experts, kapag nag-detonate ka ng isang maliit na nuclear bomb in the eye of a hurricane, baka mag-dissipate. That was the idea then but I just do not know what happened to that idea, Mme. Speaker.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes, Mme. Speaker. Upon research, hindi pa po talaga conclusive iyong ganoong klaseng way para...

REP. SUAREZ. So, still, prayers?

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes.

REP. SUAREZ. The most effective is still prayer, Mme. Speaker.

REP. JALOSJOS. Yes po.

REP. SUAREZ. Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, this Representation is satisfied with the answer of the distinguished Sponsor.

On behalf of the Minority, we do not have any more questions on the proposed budget of the Department of Science and Technology. I move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate on its budget.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, on the part of the Majority, we join the Minority in terminating the period of interpellation and debate on the DOST’s budget.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the DOST is hereby terminated.

REP. JALOSJOS. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ORTEGA (V.). Mme. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the presence of the guests of our Hon. Ramon V.A. "Rav" Rocamora of the Lone District of Siquijor: the DepEd Division family of Siquijor, headed by Assistant Schools Superintendent Edmar Ian L. Cabio, Principal Charles Dimalig, Reynaldo Santos, Mart Caulawon, Harriet Dimalig, Regin M. Jumawan, Danny Tinae, Elsa Denepol, Elmie Cosarie, and Jun Bantawig.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia-Albano). Welcome to the House of Representatives, guests of the Honorable Rocamora from Siquijor. (*Applause*)

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ORTEGA (V.). I move for the suspension of the session, Mme. Speaker.

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

*It was 6:04 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 6:06 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Munir M. Arbison presiding.*

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

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

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

The Secretary General will please read the Additional Reference of Business.

#### ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

#### BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 8290, entitled:

"AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS OF THE PHILIPPINES, AMENDING THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE REORGANIZATION AND MODERNIZATION LAW, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES"

By Representative Abayon

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 8291, entitled:

"AN ACT DECLARING THE CAVINTI UNDERGROUND RIVER AND CAVE COMPLEX AS AN ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

By Representative Agarao

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 8292, entitled:

"AN ACT DECLARING THE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES AS THE NATIONAL POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, STRENGTHENING IT FOR THE PURPOSE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

By Representative Javier

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 8293, entitled:

"AN ACT DECLARING DECEMBER 27 OF EVERY YEAR AS 'BINAYBAYON FESTIVAL DAY', FURTHER DECLARING IT AS A SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE CITY OF BAYBAY, PROVINCE OF LEYTE"

By Representative Cari

TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 8294, entitled:

"AN ACT UPGRADING THE SALARIES OF EMPLOYEES OF THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS"

By Representatives Nieto, Maceda, Martinez, Sandoval, Malapitan, Olivarez and Calixto-Rubiano

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

#### RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 2196, entitled:

"RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND SYMPATHY AND

SINCERE CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY OF KABAYAN PARTY-LIST REPRESENTATIVE, HONORABLE CIRIACO 'ACoy' CALALANG"

By Representative Uybarreta  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2197, entitled:

"RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND ELECTORAL REFORMS AND THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS PARTICULARLY THE APPOINTMENT AS ELECTORAL BOARDS OF UNIFORMED MEMBERS OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE AND OTHER SUBSTITUTES IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 14, 2018 BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN ELECTION IN COTABATO CITY"

By Representative Sema  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2198, entitled:

"RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND/OR THE COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY TO INVESTIGATE THE ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE PERTINENT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND CONCERNED LOCAL EXECUTIVE OFFICIALS, IN RESOLVING THE POWER CRISIS IN CATANDUANES, TO IDENTIFY THE ROOT PROBLEMS THEREOF AND TO IMPLEMENT THE NECESSARY SOLUTIONS WITHIN THE PERIOD OF 2018-2019"

By Representative Sarmiento (C.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2199, entitled:

"A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE CONDUCT OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MUSLIM FILIPINOS OF THE HAJJ PILGRIMAGE PROGRAM"

By Representative Dimaporo (M.K.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2200, entitled:

"RESOLUTION URGING THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM

(GSIS) TO EXTEND THE DEADLINE FOR THE AVAILMENT OF ITS LOAN RESTRUCTURING PROGRAM, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ENHANCED CONSO-LOAN PLUS, FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS FOR ANOTHER THREE MONTHS OR FROM SEPTEMBER 30, 2018 TO DECEMBER 31, 2018"

By Representatives Pineda, Romero, Salo, Lopez (B.), Salon, Belaro, Uybarreta, Bravo (A.), Lacson, Panotes, Lazatin, Villanueva, Geron, Pancho, Labadlabad, Nava, Ungab, Tinio, Castro (F.L.) and Salimbangon  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES AND PRIVATIZATION

House Resolution No. 2201, entitled:

"A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND SYMPATHIES AND SUPPORT TO THE INJURED VICTIMS OF THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE IN NORTHERN JAPANESE ISLAND OF HOKKAIDO"

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2202, entitled:

"RESOLUTION DECLARING OCTOBER 5 OR WORLD TEACHERS' DAY AND EVERY YEAR THEREAFTER AS NON-WORKING DAY FOR ALL TEACHERS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS"

By Representative Arenas  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

#### COMMUNICATION

Letter dated 21 September 2018 of Jose R. Fajardo, Director and Head, LAIG, Office of the General Counsel and Legal Services, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), furnishing the House of Representatives with a duly certified and authenticated copy of Circular No. 1013 dated 17 September 2018.  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES

#### COMMITTEE REPORT

Report by the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability and the Committee on Energy (Committee Report No. 877), re H.R. No. 566, entitled:

"RESOLUTION FOR THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY TO IMMEDIATELY CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGED MIDNIGHT DEALS

OF THE MANILA ELECTRIC COMPANY (MERALCO)-AFFILIATED GENERATION COMPANIES AND THE ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION (ERC) WHICH MAY BE DISADVANTAGEOUS TO THE PUBLIC AND MAY CAUSE POWER RATE HIKES”

informing the House of the Committees’ findings and recommendations

Sponsors: Representatives Pimentel, Velasco, Zarate and the Members of the Committees on Good Government and Public Accountability and Energy

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

#### ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

*The Secretary General read the following Resolutions, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:*

#### RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 2203, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND AND SINCERE CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE UNTIMELY DEMISE OF KABAYAN PARTY LIST REPRESENTATIVE HONORABLE CIRIACO ‘ACDY’ CALALANG”

By Representatives Suarez, Atienza, Bravo (A.), Bertiz, Paduano, Salon, Belaro, Gasataya, Yap (M.), Billones, Ferrer (J.), Cueva, Marquez, Nuñez-Malanyaon, Uy (R.), Gonzaga, Almonte, Amatong, Belmonte (J.C.), Tejada, Dimaporo (M.K.), Palma, Abellanosa, Calderon, Relampagos, Durano, Cortes, Garin (S.), Defensor, Noel and Ortega (V.N.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2204, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEES TO INQUIRE INTO THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF SOLAR POWER AS A MAJOR SOURCE OF ENERGY IN THE COUNTRY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING A UNIFORM POLICY FOR ITS GENERATION, DISTRIBUTION AND USE”

By Representative Escudero

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2205, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE

COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY INTO THE QUALITY OF SERVICES OF SUBSISTING TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES IN THE COUNTRY WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ENACTING LEGISLATIVE MEASURE TO ADDRESS THE SAME”

By Representative Escudero

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 2206, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DISALLOWING THE DEPLOYMENT OF PARA-MILITARY PERSONNEL UNDER THE SPECIAL CAFGU ACTIVE AUXILIARY (SCAA) FORCE WITHIN THE AREA OF MINDANAO DURING ELECTION PERIOD IN THE CONDUCT OF 2019 MID-TERM ELECTIONS”

By Representatives Macapagal-Arroyo and Jalosjos

TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

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

#### SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8169

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 8169.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears; the motion is approved.

#### CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8237 ON SECOND READING

#### PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 8237, contained in Committee Report No. 859, as reported out by the Committee on Legislative Franchises.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). 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.

*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. 8237, entitled: AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO SOLIDNORTH BROADCASTING SYSTEM, INC. UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8089, ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING THE SOLIDNORTH BROADCASTING SYSTEM A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN COMMERCIAL RADIO BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Sponsor of the said Bill, the Hon. Franz E. Alvarez of the First District of Palawan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Honorable Alvarez is recognized.

REP. ALVAREZ. (F.). Mr. Speaker, may I request that the Explanatory Note be considered as the sponsorship speech on the measure.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate on the said Bill.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate the honorable Sponsor or to speak against the measure, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Is there

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments from any Member, I move that we close the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 8237, under Committee Report No. 859, on Second Reading.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

#### VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 8237, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). As many as are opposed, please say *nay*. (*Silence*)

#### APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8237 ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The *ayes* have it; House Bill No. 8237 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

#### CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8264 ON SECOND READING

#### PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 8264, contained in Committee Report No. 870, as reported out by the Committee on Legislative Franchises.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). 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.

*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. 8264, entitled: AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO RADYO PILIPINO CORPORATION UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8145, ENTITLED “AN ACT GRANTING THE RADYO PILIPINO CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN COMMERCIAL RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS, SATELLITE AND CABLE STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES.”

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the Sponsor of the said Bill, the Hon. Franz Alvarez of the First District of Palawan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Honorable Alvarez is recognized.

REP. ALVAREZ (F.) Mr. Speaker, may I request that the Explanatory Note, again, be considered as the sponsorship speech on the measure.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. There being no Member who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor or to speak against the measure, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 8264, under Committee Report 870, on Second Reading.

#### VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 8264, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

#### APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8264 ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. The *ayes* have it; House Bill No. 8264 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8265 ON SECOND READING

#### PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 8265, contained in Committee Report No. 871, as reported out by the Committee on Legislative Franchises.

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

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

\* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

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

*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. 8265, entitled: AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO BEACON COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS, INC. UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8063, ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING THE BEACON COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS, INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN COMMERCIAL RADIO STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES."

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the Sponsor of the said Bill, the Hon. Franz Alvarez of the First District of Palawan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Honorable Alvarez is recognized.

REP. ALVAREZ (F.). Mr. Speaker, may I request that the Explanatory Note be considered as the sponsorship speech on the measure.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor or to speak against the measure, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 8265, under Committee Report No. 871, on Second Reading.

#### VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 8265, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

#### APPROVAL OF H.B.NO. 8265 ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The *ayes* have it; House Bill No. 8265 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8266 ON SECOND READING

#### PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 8266, contained in Committee Report No. 872, as reported out by the Committee on Legislative Franchises.

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

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

\* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

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

*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. 8266, entitled: AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO MARECO BROADCASTING NETWORK, INC. UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8108, ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING THE MARECO BROADCASTING NETWORK, INC., A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, MAINTAIN AND OPERATE RADIO BROADCASTING AND TELEVISION STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES."

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the sponsor of the said Bill, the Hon. Franz Alvarez of the First District of Palawan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The Honorable Alvarez is recognized.

REP. ALVAREZ (F.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider the Explanatory Note as the sponsorship speech on the measure.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mme. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 8266, under Committee Report No. 872, on Second Reading.

#### VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). As many as are in favor of the approval of House Bill No. 8266, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

#### APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8266 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 8266 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8268 ON SECOND READING

#### PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 8268, contained in Committee Report No. 873, as reported out by the Committee on Legislative Franchises.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). 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.

*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. 8268, entitled: AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO RADIO AUDIENCE DEVELOPERS INTEGRATED ORGANIZATION, INC. UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8083 ENTITLED “AN ACT GRANTING THE RADIO AUDIENCE DEVELOPERS INTEGRATED ORGANIZATION, INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN COMMERCIAL RADIO STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES.”

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Franz E. Alvarez of the First District of Palawan, the Sponsor of the said measure.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The Honorable Alvarez is recognized.

REP. ALVAREZ (F.). Mr. Speaker, may we enter the Explanatory Note as the sponsorship speech thereon.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor or to speak against the measure, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Is there

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Committee or individual amendments from our Members, I move that we close the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 8268, under Committee Report No. 873, on Second Reading.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

#### VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 8268 on Second Reading, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

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

FEW MEMBERS. *Nay*.

#### APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8268 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 8268 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 8269 ON SECOND READING

#### PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 8269, contained in Committee Report No. 874, as reported out by the Committee on Legislative Franchises.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). 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.

*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. 8269, entitled: AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS THE FRANCHISE GRANTED TO PHILIPPINE RADIO CORPORATION UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8032, ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING THE PHILIPPINE RADIO CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN COMMERCIAL RADIO STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES."

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Sponsor of the said measure, the Hon. Franz Alvarez of the First District of Palawan.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). The Honorable Alvarez is recognized.

REP. ALVAREZ (F.). Mr. Speaker, may we enter the Explanatory Note as the sponsorship speech thereon.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, there being no

Member who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor or to speak against the measure, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to make Committee or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 8269, under Committee Report No. 874, on Second Reading.

#### VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 8269, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). As many as are opposed, please say *nay*. (*Silence*)

#### APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 8269 ON SECOND READING

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

House Bill No. 8269 is hereby approved on Second Reading.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session for a few minutes.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

*It was 6:25 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 6:27 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

#### OMNIBUS CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE BILLS ON SECOND READING

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up the Business for Thursday and Friday. For this purpose, I move for the omnibus consideration on Second Reading of the following measures:

1. House Bill No. 8172, contained in Committee Report No. 843;
2. House Bill No. 8205, contained in Committee Report No. 851;
3. House Bill No. 8206, contained in Committee Report No. 852;
4. House Bill No. 8230, contained in Committee Report No. 855;
5. House Bill No. 8231, contained in Committee Report No. 856;
6. House Bill No. 8232, contained in Committee Report No. 857;
7. House Bill No. 8240, contained in Committee Report No. 862;
8. House Bill No. 8247, contained in Committee Report No. 864;
9. House Bill No. 8248, contained in Committee Report No. 865;
10. House Bill No. 8250, contained in Committee Report No. 868; and
11. House Bill No. 8254, contained in Committee Report No. 869.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that the

Explanatory Notes of the aforementioned House bills be considered as the introductory sponsorship speeches on each bill.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate or speak against the local bills that we are taking up, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to introduce Committee or individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move for the omnibus approval on Second Reading of the aforementioned bills.

#### VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). As many as are in favor of the approval of the bills enumerated in the omnibus motion, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). As many as are opposed, please say *nay*. (*Silence*)

#### OMNIBUS APPROVAL OF HOUSE BILLS ON SECOND READING

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

The bills enumerated in the omnibus motion are approved on Second Reading.\*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mr. Speaker...

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we include as additional coauthors of bills and resolutions that are pending in the committees, the Members appearing in the list to be submitted by the Committee on Rules after due verification of their request for inclusion as coauthors of such bills and resolutions.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ROA-PUNO. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session.

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

*It was 6:31 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 7:04 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

#### ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS

REP. ANDAYA. Mr. Speaker, on administrative matters, on the part of the Majority, I move that we elect the following Members to the Committee on Accounts:

Hon. Elisa “Olga” T. Kho as member No. 35, and Hon. John Marvin “Yul Servo” C. Nieto as member No. 40.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ANDAYA. There being no other matters, Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session until ten o’clock in the morning of Monday, October 1, 2018.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Arbison). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the session is suspended until Monday, October 1, 2018, at ten o’clock in the morning.

*It was 7:05 p.m.*

\* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)