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RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 1:00 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Conrado M. Estrella III presiding.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session.

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

It was 1:00 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 1:08 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, before we begin, I would like to personally greet our Deputy Speaker Conrado M. Estrella III a happy birthday. Happy Birthday, Deputy Speaker. *(Applause)*

REP. BELMONTE. Happy Birthday.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Thank you for reminding the Chair that he is now 25 years old. *(Laughter)*

Please proceed.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 4228

Continuation

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, under the Calendar of

Business, I move that we resume the consideration of House Bill No. 4228, and that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 4228, 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 TWENTY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS BOARD

REP. FARIÑAS (R.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Games and Amusements Board.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). There is a motion to proceed with the deliberations on the budget of the Games and Amusements Board. The Chair hears no objection; please proceed.

REP. FARIÑAS (R.). Mr. Speaker, to sponsor the proposed budget of the Games and Amusements Board, I move that we recognize Hon. Francisco Jose “Bingo” F. Matugas II, CPA, CESO, LLB, the Vice Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, to answer questions, if any.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Vice Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, Honorable Matugas, is hereby recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. FARIÑAS (R.). Before we begin, Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the presence of our guests in the gallery. From the Games and Amusements Board, we have Chairman Abraham Kahlil Mitra, Commissioner Edward Trinidad, Commissioner Mario Masanguid, Atty. Ermar Benitez, Honorable Ofelina Retardo and Ms. Ma. Luz Endina.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). To the officials from the Games and Amusements Board, headed by a former colleague, former Congressman Mitra, welcome to the House.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. FARIÑAS (R.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Jose Christopher Y. Belmonte of the Minority to interpellate the Sponsor on the proposed budget of the Games and Amusements Board.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Gentleman from Quezon City is hereby recognized.

REP. BELMONTE. Mr. Speaker, there being no member of the Minority who wishes to ask any questions, I move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Games and Amusements Board. I so move, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Thank you. Thank you, Gentleman from the Minority and we take note of your manifestation. Yes, Majority Leader.

REP. FARIÑAS (R.). Mr. Speaker, we join the Minority in the motion and move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Games and Amusements Board.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). There is a joint motion from the Minority and the Majority to terminate the consideration of the budget of the Games and Amusements Board. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) There being none; the motion is hereby approved.

REP. MATUGAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Majority Leader.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. FARIÑAS (R.). Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session to allow our guests and their technical staff members to vacate the floor and allow the guests of the next agency to settle down.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The session is suspended for five minutes.

It was 1:12 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 1:13 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the period of interpellation on the proposed budget for the Philippine Sports Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). There is a motion to proceed to the budget deliberations on Philippine Sports Commission. The Chair hears no objection, please proceed.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Mr. Speaker, before we move on to the proposed budget of the Philippine Sports Commission, I move to recognize Vice Chairman Rep. Francisco Jose “Bingo” F. Matugas II, CPA, CESO, LLB, of the Committee on Appropriations, for this Department, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The honorable Vice Chairman Matugas is hereby recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Majority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Before we begin, Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the presence of our guests in the gallery. From the Philippine Sports Commission, we have Chairman William Ramirez, Executive Director Merlita Ibay, Chief Accountant Erik Jean Mayores, Chief Planning Larry Domingo, and Acting Chief Budget Violeta Tuazon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Chair, on behalf of the House, welcomes our friends from the Philippine Sports Commission headed by Chairman Butch Ramirez. Welcome to the House.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that we recognize Rep. Jose Christopher Y. Belmonte to interpellate the Sponsor on the proposed budget of the Philippine Sports Commission.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The Gentleman from Quezon City, representing the Minority, is hereby recognized.

REP. BELMONTE. Thank you again, Mr. Speaker.

There being no member of the Minority who wishes to ask any questions, I move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budget of the Philippine Sports Commission.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Thank you, Gentleman from Quezon City. We take note of your manifestation.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Mr. Speaker, we join the Minority in the motion and move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Philippine Sports Commission.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). There is a joint motion from both the Minority and Majority to terminate the deliberations on the budget of the Philippine Sports Commission. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The deliberation on the budget of the Philippine Sports Commission is hereby terminated.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Majority Leader.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session to allow our guests and technical staff to vacate the floor and allow the guests and technical staff of the next department and agency access to the floor.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Congratulations to the Philippine Sports Commission family.

Session is hereby suspended.

It was 1:16 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 1:17 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

PHILIPPINE RACING COMMISSION

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Philippine Racing Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). There is a motion ...

REP. VILLAR. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). There is a motion to proceed with the deliberations on the budget of the Philippine Racing Commission. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) There being none, the motion is approved. Please proceed.

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, to sponsor the proposed budget of the Philippine Racing Commission, I move that we recognize Rep. Juan Miguel Macapagal Arroyo, the Vice Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations to answer questions, if any.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Vice Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, Honorable Arroyo, is hereby recognized.

REP. VILLAR. Before we begin, Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of our guests in the gallery: the Chairman of the Philippine Racing Commission, Chairman Andrew Sanchez; the Chief Accountant, Marcelino Torres; and the Chief Budget, John Edward Timbol.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Welcome to the House of Representatives, our coworkers in the Philippine Racing Commission.

The Mme. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Jose Christopher Y. Belmonte of the Minority to interpellate the Sponsor on the proposed budget of the Philippine Racing Commission.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Gentleman from Quezon City is hereby recognized.

REP. BELMONTE. Mr. Speaker, there being no member of the Minority who wishes to ask any questions,

I move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the Philippine Racing Commission.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Thank you, honorable Gentleman from Quezon City.

The Mme. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, we join the Minority in the motion and move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Philippine Racing Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). There is a joint motion from the Minority and the Majority to terminate the consideration of the budget of the Philippine Racing Commission. Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The consideration of the budget of the Philippine Racing Commission is hereby terminated.

REP. MACAPAGAL ARROYO. Thank you very much.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. VILLAR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session to allow our guests and the technical staff of the next department to settle down.

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

It was 1:20 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 1:24 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ALONTE. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed with the interpellation on the proposed budget of the TESDA.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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

REP. ALONTE. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Francisco Jose “Bingo” F. Matugas II, CPA, CESO, LLB, to sponsor this agency.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). There is a motion to proceed with the deliberation on the budget of the TESDA.

The distinguished Gentleman from the First District of Surigao del Norte, Honorable Matugas, is hereby recognized.

REP. ALONTE. Mr. Speaker, before we begin with the Sponsor, may we acknowledge the presence of our guests in the gallery. We have TESDA Dir. Gen. Isidro S. Lapeña, Dep. Dir. Gen. Rosanna Urdaneta, Dep. Dir. Gen. Gladys Rosales, Dep. Dir. Gen. Rebecca Calzado, Dep. Dir. Gen. Mariano Michael D. Velarde Jr. and the other officers of TESDA.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). To the distinguished son of Pangasinan, Director General Lapeña, all the officers and friends from TESDA, welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ALONTE. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize our first interpellator, the Representative from the Third District of Camarines Sur, Hon. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Gentleman from Camarines Sur, the Honorable Bordado, is hereby recognized.

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

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, last year, I had a meeting with some of the officials of TESDA and I was telling them to conduct an independent study to determine the impact of their so-called Training for Work Scholarship Program. Let me know, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, if the TESDA has done anything about it.

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, as of July 2019, the TESDA has made a report on their Training for Work Scholarship Program. They have target beneficiaries of 238,000, of which 88,000 or 37 percent has been accomplished, considering that it is just a little over halfway of 2019. But if we compare it to 2018, they had a 247,370 target beneficiaries, with an actual accomplishment of 349,028 or 141 percent performance, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, who conducted the study? Remember that I was requesting the TESDA to come up with an independent study

which should be conducted by people not connected with the TESDA.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, may I ask for a suspension of the session.

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

It was 1:29 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 1:29 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The distinguished Gentleman from Surigao del Norte is recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the study was conducted under the supervision of the Philippine Statistics Authority, and the enumerators were hired from a different agency, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BORDADO. Okay, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. Let me just cite the study conducted by the PIDS way back in 2011, authored by Orbeta and Abrigo. The PIDS in 2011 conducted a review of the implementation of the scholarship programs of the TESDA, notably the TWSP. The primary objectives of the study were to determine first, the internal efficiency through the dropout rate; and second, the external efficiency through the rate of employment of scholars of the TESDA Tech-Voc programs. Note, Mr. Speaker, that the authors indicated a minimum performance standard based on the agency's efficiency indicators in the implementation of the TWSP, for instance, Mr. Speaker, 60 percent employment rate within one year after the end of training and 75 percent certification rates among its graduates.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the key findings were the TWSPs increased graduation rates, but failed to increase assessment and certification rates. Data from the administrative reporting system showed that graduation rates for the TWSP scholars was 98.5 percent, a very high figure. While there appeared to be no problem with dropouts, Mr. Speaker, data from both the administrative and IES showed the certification rate for TWSP scholars was only 40 percent, well below the standard graduation rates. While this may be understandable, Mr. Speaker, for non-scholars who want to spend their own money, this may be a cause for

concern because certification is one of the performance indicators of the programs.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, what is the status right now?

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, we agree with the report about the 2011 statistics that it has been low, but after 2011, reforms have been made by the agency, and let me enumerate the improvements that they have done since then: the competency assessment became mandatory for all programs; qualification criteria for participating TVIs include higher employment performance; demand-driven allocation; higher...

REP. BORDADO. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, let me just ask what is now the rate of employment? I was telling you that eight years ago it was at 40 percent. Now, what is the current rate of employment of the graduates of the TESDA?

REP. MATUGAS. As of 2019 July, the latest certification rate of TESDA graduates is already at 93.8 percent.

REP. BORDADO. What?

REP. MATUGAS. Ninety-three point eight percent.

REP. BORDADO. Mr. Speaker, are you sure of that figure?

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, it is the ...

REP. BORDADO. It means that out of 10 graduates of TESDA, nine will get some jobs, Mr. Speaker. Are you sure, Mr. Speaker?

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, it is the data provided from the study made by TESDA.

REP. BORDADO. Can you provide us with that study?

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. TESDA can provide.

REP. BORDADO. Okay. The TESDA has been conducting the TWSP with the assurance that the graduates will be given tool kits, but for the past few months, the TESDA has miserably failed to deliver the tool kits. Why?

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the

year 2018 has been recognized as a problem primarily because of an ongoing legal case as we speak. It is with the Court of Appeals. There is a TRO against the TESDA to bid the tool kits. The TESDA is now resolving because that case was inherited by our new Secretary, Secretary Lapeña, so it was not during his time. But as for 2019, the tool kits are about to be bid by the PITC this coming October 2, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. In other words, that particular problem will eventually be resolved?

REP. MATUGAS. With regard to the 2018 tool kits, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the TESDA family is still awaiting the decision of the Office of the Solicitor General because the said office is appealing the case with the Court of Appeals. But once it is resolved, then TESDA can proceed to bid the tool kits for 2018. For 2019, it is already scheduled on October 2, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. Okay, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, I am requesting the TESDA to give us updates on the case.

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

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

REP. MATUGAS. Thank you very much, Your Honor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Thank you, distinguished Gentleman from Camarines Sur. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ALONTE. Mr. Speaker, the next to interpellate is Hon. France L. Castro from the ACT TEACHERS Party-List. I move that she be recognized.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Lady is hereby recognized.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Magandang hapon po sa ating lahat.

Iyong atin po bang kagalang-galang na Sponsor ay puwedeng tumanggap ng ilang clarificatory questions mula sa Kinatawang ito?

REP. MATUGAS. Puwede po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Dalawang item lang, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor. Dito sa budget ng TESDA, nalulungkot ako, Mr. Speaker, kasi may budget cuts sa

operations ng ating technical vocational institutions. Para po sa scholarship, as a whole, ang kaltas po ay P703,650,000. Under the Technical Education and Skills Development Program po ng TESDA, ito ang items na may cuts: 1) promotion development and implementation of quality technical education skills development programs was cut by P280,498,000; and 2) promotion development implementation, monitoring and evaluation of technical education and skills development scholarship and student assistance program was cut by P449,824,000.

Mr. Speaker, itong items na ito ay mahalaga po sa ating mga mamamayan, lalong-lalo na po sa ating mga kabataan. Iyong technical vocational institutions, lalong-lalo na po sa pagpapatupad ng Free Higher Education Law. Alam po naman natin na ang DepEd, CHED at ang TESDA ay kasama po sa pagpapatupad ng ating quality education, partikular sa higher education.

So, ang tanong po, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, paano po mai-implementa ng ating TESDA iyong Free Higher Education Law kung mayroon ganitong kasignipekanteng pagkaltas sa MOOE?

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, original po talaga na ang proposed ng TESDA was P19.9 billion na budget para po mabigyan-tuon iyong pangangailangan ng ating kababayan para sa trabaho. Kaya lang po, pagdating po sa DBM, medyo nakaltasan. So, sa panig po ng TESDA, hindi po nila ginawa iyong pagkaltas, kundi, ginawa po iyon sa panig ng DBM. Gusto sana nilang mapalaki iyong budget lalo na may mandato sila under E.O. No. 70 na tulongan iyong mga indigenous people natin, iyong mga rebel returnees, mabigyan ng trabaho kaagad.

So, ito pong pagkaltas ay nakikita natin na mababawasan talaga. Nag-agree po ang TESDA dito na mababawasan iyong capacity nila na makabigay ng trabaho. Siguro, sa tamang panahon, baka mapagbigyan ang TESDA. Pero, iyon po ang maisasagot ko sa ngayon, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Salamat po, Mr. Sponsor.

So, unang-una po, hindi po dapat pinayagan ito ng TESDA dahil alam naman natin na napakahalaga noong mandate ng ating ahensyang ito na may kinalaman po sa edukasyon na may ka-link na trabaho, na ito naman po iyong pangunahing pangangailangan ng ating mga mamamayan o ating mga young Filipinos.

Pero, alam ninyo po, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, mayroon po ditong bagong item na nakalagay. At, ayon din po sa President's Budget Message, mayroong pondo ang TESDA para sa NTF-ELCAC na nagkakahalaga ng P96 million. So, ano po ba iyong papel ng TESDA dito sa NTF-ELCAC, Mr. Speaker?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, may I ask for a one-minute suspension of the session.

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

It was 1:42 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 1:43 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

Yes, Gentleman from Surigao del Norte is hereby recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Your Honor, ito pong budget na ito ay dahil po ang TESDA ay ang lead agency sa poverty reduction program na binibigyan siya ng ating Presidente na tuunan ng pansin, particularly sa ating mga former rebels, iyong sa indigenous people under E.O. No. 70. So, ang TESDA ay gumagawa po ng mga programa para mapababa iyong poverty level ng bansa through skills development and livelihood programs, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Ito lang po, Mr. Speaker, mayroon po tayong P96 million na budget para dito sa NTF-ELCAC. Hindi naman po nakakabigla, pero part naman ito noong sinasabi nilang E.O. No. 70, itong whole-of-nation approach at isa itong TESDA bilang ahensya na ginagamit ng gobyerno partikular doon sa sinasabi natin na poverty alleviation through skills training na P96 million.

So, maaari po bang malaman ng Kinatawang ito, Mr. Speaker, ano po iyong mga balak ng TESDA dito sa P96 million? Ano iyong mga item na nakapaloob dito sa P96 million na ito? Ano-ano iyong mga programa, ilan po ang mga benepisyaryo at ano po iyong magiging outcome nito pagkatapos? Mayroon po ba itong time frame? So, gusto pong malaman ng Kinatawang ito kung saan dadalhin itong P96 million na ito through the NTF-ELCAC Program ng TESDA.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, ito pong sinasabi nating P96 million ay dapat po sana mas mataas pa iyan. Kasi, ang pagtuunan niya na budget ay doon po sa mobile training natin, pag-acquire po ng mga mobile training equipment para po ilagay doon sa mga conflict areas ng ating bansa. Kasi po, iyong mga kababayan natin, hindi po naman sila lahat makapunta sa mga regional offices o sa provincial level. Iyong bansa po natin ay binubuo ng maraming isla. So, itong budget na ito,

maliit po, actually, dapat po sana P500 million, pero ang naibigay po is only P95.5 million; P50 million po para sa mobile training equipment, saka iyong P45 million doon sa operating expenses, para po makapunta ng maayos ang mga TESDA trainers natin, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Puwede po bang mag-request ang Kinatawang ito ng written document kung paano idi-disburse itong pondo na ito na P96 million? Kasi ang Kinatawang ito, Mr. Speaker, kanina sinabi nga, ang laki po ng kaltas ng MOOE, na ito rin naman ay patuon din doon sa pagpapatupad natin ng ating Free Higher Education Law. Binanggit ng ating Sponsor kanina, kabilang na din dito iyong rebel returnee, kung hindi ako nagkakamali, at may separate na P96 million.

In the interest of time, Mr. Speaker, puwede po bang mag-submit sa Kinatawang ito ng written plan kung paano itong P96 million na ito ay gagastusin para doon sa sinasabi nating target beneficiary, para sa MOOE, para po doon sa sinasabi nilang mobile, saan-saan at iyong mga beneficiaries po, puwede po bang mag-submit?

REP. MATUGAS. Puwede po, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. Ang TESDA po ay magbibigay ng kasulatan o iyong report kung paano po sya i-allocate, iyong P95.5 million na iyon.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, siguro last na. Kailan po? Kailan po puwedeng maibigay ng ating ahensiya, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. MATUGAS. Puwede po pagkatapos po nitong budget ng TESDA, maibibigay nila, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Sige, maraming salamat po, dahil parang lump sum ito na nakita natin doon sa budget.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Maraming salamat din po sa inyo, Hon. France Castro from the ACT TEACHERS Party-List.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ALONTE. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Representative of the First District of Marikina, Hon. Bayani F. Fernando, for his manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The distinguished Gentleman from the First District of Marikina is hereby recognized.

REP. FERNANDO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. I am here for a very short

manifestation, and it is about the Certificate of Program Registration of the agency of the TESDA.

I understand you certify welders. Is that so? Is that right?

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, Your Honor. Part po ng program.

REP. FERNANDO. To certify a welder, you would need some—you have to test him, and he has to pass a skill test. Let us say, to deposit at least 20 kilos of welding electrodes, of welding, of welds in a day? Are you doing that? Are you testing the welders for this much to deposit 20 kilograms of welds in a day?

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, Your Honor. That is based on the standards that TESDA is giving and in accordance also with their program, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. FERNANDO. Incidentally, Mr. Sponsor, I mean that industry that you have to employ a lot of welders, 'no? And we receive applicants who came and certified by your agency, and I felt they were not too far from the requirements of the industry. I understand, the tests given to them are not enough, 'no? They are not qualified enough to do the job productively. They are not productive.

So, I wonder, if that is so, you are asking them to deposit 20 kilograms of welds. Who will spend for the purchase for these welding electrodes? Is it your agency?

REP. MATUGAS. It is the TESDA po, Your Honor, which will purchase. In fact, it is part of the scholarship fees.

REP. FERNANDO. In that case, how much welding electrodes are in your budget per year? For last year, how much was spent to buy these electrodes?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, may I ask for a one-minute suspension of the session to secure the answer.

REP. FERNANDO. Yes, maybe...

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

It was 1:51 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 1:54 p.m., the session was resumed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). The session is resumed. The distinguished Sponsor is hereby recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, per data gathered from the TESDA, over the last six years, they spent about P2.4 billion for the welding program or welding electrodes. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. FERNANDO. Is it a sizable amount?

REP. MATUGAS. Yes.

REP. FERNANDO. Anyway, in the interest of time, we are not going so much more on the details of this. But I believe we have to review this item, this certification process that you are undertaking. Now, I understand also that you are giving your graduates welding machines.

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. In the program called STEP, the students or the beneficiaries are given tool kits.

REP. FERNANDO. I am wondering, why do you have to give them welding machines? Is the agency training welders to be entrepreneurs or for industry?

REP. MATUGAS. It is both, Your Honor. The STEP is actually both for self-employment and for livelihood and for them to hone their skills so that they can apply in big industries—shipping, and ship-building industries, Your Honor.

REP. FERNANDO. I think there is an anomaly. There is a disconnect or I do not think it is in the interest of entrepreneurship to train welders to be entrepreneurs so they can put up shops, and most of these welders are from depressed communities.

Where are they going to connect these welding machines? They draw so much power. It may even cause fire. It may start fire with overloaded powerlines. And do we expect them to be on the sidewalks lined up there to do some welding jobs?

I think that needs to be reviewed too, that we are actually better off—it will be better if we put in mind, or at least in your program, consider to train them for employment but not for entrepreneurship. By employment, they will learn more and probably if that would be their fate, in the future, after they have acquired the necessary skills and also the skill to manage as a businessman, as an entrepreneur, these will be with them. But in the meantime, I believe that it will be better off if we stick to train them for employment and most especially for our industries.

With that, I would not belabor you any further on this, as I would not want to spend more time on this. But anyway, I raised this question. Let it be on record,

and at the appropriate time, I will file the necessary amendment. But please review your budget. I should say, if there is any budget to buy welding machines to give to your graduates, if you can strike it out, better put it in worthwhile activities for the agency.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. Thank you.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Thank you, Hon. Bayani Fernando from the First District of Marikina.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ALONTE. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize our Minority Leader, Hon. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Yes, the distinguished Minority Leader, Hon. Benny Abante, is hereby recognized.

REP. ABANTE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, Honorable Matugas.

We would like, first of all, to welcome the TESDA family led by Secretary Isidro Lapeña in being with us today.

My manifestation, Mr. Speaker, would involve some questions, but I do not need the Sponsor to answer those questions. I just want to put this on record.

So, may I proceed, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, for my manifestation?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Please proceed.

REP. ABANTE. Well, the proposal of TESDA was for a budget of P19.9 billion, but the DBM which is the only authorized agency to slash the budget of many departments has reduced this to only P11.851 billion.

Now this amount is six percent lower than its 2019 budget of P12.555 billion. And, perhaps, the foregoing question should be how will TESDA cope with this budget deduction? What programs or projects will no longer get funding? Mapag-iwanan po ang ilang mga programa. Not included in the 2020 NEP budget for TESDA is the budget requirement for the implementation of the Tulong-Trabaho Act which mandates free access to technical-vocational education in order to address job skills mismatch and unemployment in the country. The budget requirement for the Tulong-Trabaho Act according to TESDA amounts to about P1.5 billion.

Well, if I may ask another question, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, tungkol naman po ito sa findings ng COA.

If TESDA has already addressed the adverse findings of the Commission on Audit on its use of government funds, of course, this is not yet under the watch of our good Secretary here because according to the 2018 COA Report, TESDA has a development fund with current accumulated balance of P201 million invested in long-term bonds. The COA has ruled that this is improper because the TESDA is supposed to use this fund for training and assistance.

Now, of course, I just would like to put on record, if I may ask another question, what will TESDA do in response to the COA adverse finding? O eto po, bilang isa on the ground na nag-oobserve at nakakaranig ng mga ganitong alingasngas, bakit hindi gamitin ang pondong ito para sa Tulong-Trabaho Program? Nandiyan lang iyong pondo sa account ng TESDA. Maaaring pinapatubuan lang ng interes iyan, ano po?

Now, I am not accusing TESDA of anything. Opo, pero siguro mas maganda pong malaman na ito ng ating good Secretary sapagkat ito ay malinaw na paglabag sa purpose ng pondong ito. Paano natin bibigyan ng karagdagang pondo ang TESDA kung hindi nga ito magamit nang tama, ang pondong inilaan ng Kongreso ng mga nagdaang taon? Maaaring ito ang nakita ng DBM kaya ini-slash ang kanilang pondo.

Well, of course, another related question would be, mayroon pa po bang partnership? Ang sabi nga po ng COA, iyong AMA Computer College, the Commission on Audit on its last year's report questioned TESDA's use of more than P10 million in funds for training programs that had fictitious scholars, teachers, and training centers through a partnership with AMA Computer College. Perhaps, this ought to be addressed, ano po?

I do not need the answer now. I just would like to put this on record. In the said report, TESDA Manila paid AMACC P9.3 million for the training of scholars who, as COA has said, turned out to be non-existent. Tama po ba ang COA dito o mali? The same audit report disclosed that they were actually students of the Fairview Campus, but based on the official document from TESDA, they actually came from AMACC Sta. Mesa Branch.

Naku doon pa iyan sa aking distrito, ano po. Ano na po ba ang nangyari sa anomalyang ito? May nakasuhan po ba? Sabi nga po ng iba o sinasabi ko lamang po dito baka naman may partnership pa din ang AMACC at TESDA. Naniniwala po ako na inilagay po ng ating Pangulo si Secretary Lapeña sa TESDA hindi lamang upang pangunahan ang TESDA, ano po, sa kaniyang magandang ginagawa kundi upang ihinto din po ang mga korapsyon sa loob kung mayroon man.

Ngayon, I would like instead to just make this last paragraph, ano po, on the budget of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority. In my years as a public servant, I have seen the demand and the need for skills training in the community to give

every opportunity to the Filipino people to have a decent livelihood and source of income. Their requested P19.9 billion budget has been reduced to P11.851 billion. As I have said, there has been a 6 percent decrease from their 2019 P12.55 billion budget. I personally believe that with the stewardship of our good Secretary, they should receive more to cope with the needs of skilled workers.

TESDA's mandate to provide accessible, high quality and efficient technical education and skills development in support of high quality Filipino middle-level manpower responsive to and in accordance with the Philippine development goals and priorities should be prioritized more than ever. It was created to mobilize the full participation of the industry, labor, technical and vocational institutions, local government and civil society for skilled manpower development programs.

This is one of the most effective weapons that we have, not only to alleviate poverty but also to contribute to nation-building. With that, kahit na po mayroong ilang mga negatibong bagay ang sinabi ko na dapat malaman ng ating Secretary, ano po, I would like to manifest my support for the passage of the budget of TESDA with the hope that it will be increased and they will be able to get about P3 billion increase in their budget right now.

Mr. Speaker, with no one in the Minority who would like to ask any question, I move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate. *(Applause)*

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella.). Thank you, distinguished Minority Leader. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. ALONTE. Mr. Speaker, I join the Minority in the motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella.). There is a joint motion to terminate the deliberations on the budget of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

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

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella.). The deliberations on the budget of ...

REP. MATUGAS. Thank you very much, Majority Leader.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella.). ... the TESDA is hereby terminated.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ALONTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session to allow our guests and their technical staff to vacate the floor and allow the guests and the technical staff of the next department or agency to settle down, Mr. Speaker.

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

It was 2:09 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:14 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

REP. BARONDA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed with the interpellations on the proposed budget of the Department of Health.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella.). There is a motion to proceed with the deliberations on the budget of the Department of Health.

REP. BARONDA. Department of Health, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella.). Yes. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the distinguished Sponsor, please proceed.

REP. BARONDA. Mr. Speaker, to sponsor the proposed budget of the Department of Health, I move that we recognize Rep. "Kuya" Jose Antonio R. Sy-Alvarado, Vice Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, to answer the questions or query, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella.). The Sponsor, the honorable Vice Chairman, the Gentleman from Bulacan, Honorable Sy-Alvarado, is hereby recognized.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am now ready to defend the budget of the DOH in 2020, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. BARONDA. Mr. Chairman, before we begin, we would like to acknowledge the presence of our guests in the plenary: Secretary Francisco Duque, Usec. Roger Tong-an, Usec. Rolando Enrique Domingo, Usec. Myrna Cabotaje, Usec. Mario Villaverde, Usec. Gerardo Bayugo, Usec. Lilibeth David, Usec. Ma. Carolina Taiño and the rest of the DOH family, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Our co-workers from the Department of Health, headed by the distinguished son of Pangasinan, honorable Secretary Duque, welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BARONDA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Janette L. Garin of Iloilo province to interpellate the Sponsor on the proposed budget of the Department of Health.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Estrella). Yes, Honorable Garin, the Lady from the province of Iloilo, is hereby recognized.

The session is suspended.

It was 2:17 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 2:18 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The distinguished Lady from the First District of Iloilo, Honorable Garin, is hereby recognized.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, thank you for giving us the opportunity to deliberate on the proposed budget of an agency that really runs through the core of every Filipino family.

May I request my staff to please flash my slides.

The first slide, please.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, way back on July 19, 2019, newspapers and various agencies published reports that the honorable Secretary of Health, Hon. Pingkoy Duque, declared a dengue alert. May I get the affirmation from our distinguished Sponsor.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Next slide, please.

After the declaration of the dengue alert comes now the declaration of the national dengue epidemic. This was published in a press conference on August 6, 2019. May I get the affirmation from the honorable Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. We confirm, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, Your Honor. Next slide, please.

It now came out in several newspapers that the DOH Calabarzon Chief heads the National Dengvaxia Task Force, and allow me to quote from the newspapers: "Health Secretary Francisco Duque has appointed Calabarzon Regional Health Director Eduardo Janairo as Chair of the National Dengue Task Force."

May I get the affirmation from the honorable Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). May I find out on what merits or basis did Dr. Janairo qualify as Chief of the National Dengue Task Force?

Next slide please.

If the honorable Sponsor can educate us, ano po ba ang mga kwalipikasyon ni Dr. Janairo sa DOH para maging head ng National Dengue Task Force?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, there was a profiling done by Region IV-A and the profiling of Region IV-A affirms that, indeed, Director Eduardo Janairo has a better profile than the others, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, may I inquire if Dr. Janairo has any experience in infectious diseases, especially when it comes to training as an internist or an infectious disease specialist or is he part of the Executive Committee of the Department of Health?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, being a director for many years, the DOH believes that he has expertise in that field, Mr. Speaker, in public health, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, may I reiterate my question: Is Dr. Janairo a specialist on infectious diseases?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. He is not, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. Are there other specialists in the DOH family, including the DOH hospitals, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

To just reiterate ...

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, I stand corrected. Dr. Janairo previously headed the Public Health Service, that is why he is already qualified to lead the Dengvaxia Task Force, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Let me qualify my question. I am not referring to a general public health practice. I am referring to being an infectious disease specialist. So, my question is this. Is Director Janairo an infectious disease specialist or not?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. No, Mr. Speaker. He is not.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

To follow through, are there other infectious disease specialists in the DOH family or among the 83 hospitals under the Department of Health?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). I would presume a lot, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor. Do you agree with me?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Let me just proceed to the next slide.

Noong pumutok po ang dengue outbreak sa buong Pilipinas, kaliwa't kanan po ng ating mga gobernador, mayors, local government chief executives and even Congressmen ang nanawagan ng tulong. Isa po sa pinagkaguluhan nang lahat ay ang napakamahal na dengue rapid test kit. Ano po ba ito? Ito po ang ginagamit ng ating RHUs, ng ating mga ospital, ng ating mga doktor para malaman kung ang pasyenteng may lagnat ay positibo ba o negatibo sa dengue. Kapag siya ay positibo, eh dadalhin siya sa pinakamalapit na hospital. Surprisingly, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the COBAC Secretariat of the Department of Health released this paper which says—ito po iyong bidding document for the dengue test kit. Can I have the slide please, and make it bigger.

(Slide presentation)

It actually says: “We would like to inform your good office that we are cancelling the procurement of the above-mentioned subject with an ABC of P22,059,600.” This is in relation to the dengue rapid test kit. This was dated July 23, 2019.

Ito po sana iyong gagamitin sa outbreak sa Leyte, sa Iloilo, kung saan po iyong ating kasamahan, no other than Cong. Yedda Romualdez, called for the distribution of more dengue test kits from the Department of Health. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, in the midst of the dengue crisis and dengue outbreak, iyong procurement at iyong bidding ay biglang hininto at inilipat iyong pera sa Region IV-A, where surprisingly, the head of the dengue task force is also assigned.

Will the distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, confirm the veracity of this document?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, the Department will check the document.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor. I have already verified this and apparently, iyong pambili ng dengue testing kit na kailangan na kailangan ng ating mga cities, probinsiya at bayan sa Region VI, sa Region VIII, sa Mindanao and even in Metro Manila, was transferred—hindi po iyong kit kung hindi iyong pondo ang inilipat sa Region IV-A, where maybe out of circumstance, doon po nagdu-duty iyong ating head ng Dengue Task Force.

Let me proceed to the next slide please.

(Slide presentation)

Noong sinubaybayan ko po ang mga activities ng Region IV, which was supposed to handle the National Dengue Task Force of the Philippines, ito po iyong aking naabutan. Is the honorable Secretary or the honorable Department of Health aware of the company we call Vireo Loadworks, Incorporated?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, can the distinguished Honorable Garin repeat the question, Mr. Speaker?

REP. GARIN (J.). Alam po ba o kilala po ba ng ating Department of Health family iyong Vireo Loadworks, Inc.?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. The Secretary does not know Vireo—

REP. GARIN (J.). Loadworks ...

REP. SY-ALVARADO. ... Incorporated but definitely, the DOH will look into it, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

Vireo Loadworks, Inc. posted and announced, “Dengue outbreak is a real problem in the Philippines. Vireo Loadworks has taken a stand to help the government in its capacity to provide monitoring x x x.” If you are going to read further, it says, “... the Department of Health in the noble goal to help prevent deaths and catch symptomatology early enough to help prevent morbidity. Thank you for this chance. We are so honored.”

Because I am pressed for time, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I will not flash other slides here related to Vireo Loadworks anymore, but it is very clear—next slide, please—that Vireo Loadworks apparently was tapped by Director Janairo, the head of the Dengue Task Force, who is not an infectious disease specialist, in contrast to the hundreds of specialists that we have in the Department of Health.

Here we are again: Experts’ panel meeting at the Vireo Loadworks’ initiative to do the dengue vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases monitoring as our contribution to the control and management of dengue. There is representation from the Regional Office of the DOH, Region IV and NCR, together with Spot Media Marketing Communications President, Paulo Angelo Florenda and staff Carlo Florenda, and they are actually thanking former DOH Secretary Dr. Paulyn Jean Rosell Ubial. This was actually after the honorable Secretary appointed Janairo as the head of the Dengue Task Force.

Napakasarap naman po ng buhay nila. Habang marami po iyong nao-ospital, may mga namamatay, nandidito po iyong ating Task Force, pa-meeting meeting sa hotel, pa-aircon aircon, pakain-kain ng mga masarap, samantalang patuloy po na nagdurusa ang ating mga local government units who are not getting enough support insofar as the dengue test kits are concerned. Eh bakit po natin popondohan ito? Bakit po seminar at training ulit? Bakit sangkatutak na meetings kaysa sundin natin ang ginagawa ni Secretary Duque, na wala nang pagod na umiikot sa buong Pilipinas? I know this was not done with a bad intention, but maybe, honorable Secretary Duque, you appointed the wrong person.

May I move to my next slide, Mr. Speaker.

Okay na sana, but if we dig further, ano po ba ang kumpanyang ito, Vireo Loadworks? Initially, it talks about “medical professionals who believe that everybody has a right to enjoy quality basic services.” Agree, tama po tayo diyan. But look at their company profile.

Can we make it bigger, please.

While it is an alleged “group of established medical professionals,” with their photos, showing

the photos of the former Secretary Paulyn Rosell-Ubial, it also mentions the main core of their business. “Everyone who lives in the Philippines,” according to Vireo Loadworks, “agree, that aside from food, shelter and clothing, mobile phone loads now constitute the basic needs. People will cut down their food budget just to have enough money for cellphone load. That is why we at Vireo have come up with a business solution with mobile phone load as its main product.”

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I would have loved to prod deeper, pero mas lalong nakakahiya kung ipagpapatuloy ko pa po ang aking presentasyon in relation to this. But it is very clear, maliwanag pa po sa sikat ng araw that Vireo Loadworks, which Director Janairo and Region IV have tapped to handle the national dengue outbreak, is a business establishment selling cellphone loads.

May I get the comment of the Department, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, iimbestigahan po ng Departamento itong pangyayaring ito at hindi po kukunsintihin ng ating Secretary ang anumang anomalyang nangyayari sa Department of Health, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, and I would like to laud the honorable Secretary of Health for being very open in curbing corruption among his ranks.

Next slide please.

Kung titingnan pa po natin, under the complaint section, there is actually an existing complaint against Vireo Loadworks. I do not care if they are in cahoots with the former Secretary of Health. My friendship with my successor ends when my loyalty to the Department of Health is called upon to police the few people who are actually infecting and destroying the good name of the Department of Health. Vireo Loadworks, the website Complaints Board states, “is a prepaid mobile phone loading platform based in the Philippines recruiting business centers to become its franchise.”

At kung titingnan pa po natin, palakihin po natin, it says, they are converting “cash in the Philippines without regulation and therefore, does not abide by the Anti-Money Laundering/Remittance laws.”

Next, slide, please.

In fact, we actually have complainants, but let me just cite one complainant—can you enlarge the specific complainant? It involves Loysa Orense who actually owns and heads Vireo Loadworks and who has been assisting Secretary Ubial, when she was, I

think, with the Department, and even after she left the Department. “Loysa Orense got my husband.” This is the allegation, let me quote it from Complaints Board: “Loysa Orense got my husband to become a Business Center in New Jersey when she arrived on June 3, 2017. When he found out that she wanted to do the remittance without any legal documents, rather than just selling load for phones, he decided to back-out but she refused to give back the money,”—which is \$45,000—“and flew back to the Philippines on October 20, 2017.” It also states that she has not responded to “any of our attempts to reach her by email, phone, instant message on Facebook. She has also bragged many times that she has carried tens and thousands of dollars out of the US without reporting it, therefore, smuggling cash in and out of the country.”

Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I have worked with Secretary Duque and probably 90 percent of the members of the Department of Health family. I can vouch for their non-tolerance insofar as this action is concerned. May I get the affirmation of the Department, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, the Department requests for the documents being shown by our honorable colleague, Deputy Minority Leader Janette Garin, so the DOH family can investigate on the matter, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). And then last—next slide, please.

Ayan po, nakikita ninyo po ang activities niya?

Napakalungkot po, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, na kung saan marami ang nagkakasakit sa isang sakit na walang gamot, at ngayon nga ay ipinagbawal ang paggamit ng bakuna, napakasakit na iyong pera na sana inilaan para sa Region 8, Region 6, NCR, para gamitin sa dengue ay palutoy na nilulustay sa mga seminars at walang kuwentang mga meetings. Ang pinakamasakit pa, government money is being spent on an unproven advertising and promotion agency. Marami pong magagaling na doktor ang Pilipinas; marami po tayong tagahanga sa ibang bansa. We do not need a company that sells mobile loads and which has a lot of complaints to do the work for us.

Be that as it may, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, can I get the commitment of the Department of Health that a special audit be requested from the Commission on Audit so that they may conduct a special audit from the past 10 years on all the transactions of the Center for Health Disease Region 4-A?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Maraming salamat po.

Alam ko po Mr. Speaker, na noong dumating si Secretary Duque ay marami po siyang nilinis dahil sa Ubial mess.

Next slide, please. Japanese Encephalitis—ito po ay sakit na nagmula sa Japan. This was discovered in Japan. Unfortunately, in my 10 years in the Department of Health, we were alarmed because babies were dying in Region I and in Region II, and a culture has revealed that the presence of the Japanese Encephalitis virus is now rampant in the Philippines. Paano po? Nasa atin po iyong lamok at mayroon po tayong mga babuyan. You only need a pig and a mosquito, and this is again another illness that has struck our country.

Next slide, please. In 2016, after I left the office, the Department of Health had a budget to procure the Japanese Encephalitis vaccine. Iniwan ko po iyan sa pumalit sa akin. We tried hard to defend the allocation of that budget because I knew, as a doctor and a vaccinologist, that nobody should die from vaccine-preventable diseases. Dito po mismo sa Kongreso noong 2016, ipinagmalaki ni Secretary Ubial na ipagpapatuloy niya ang Japanese Encephalitis Vaccination Program at hindi niya ito haharangan. True to her word, they continued the program; however; there were meetings allegedly between certain Chinese businessmen and honorable former Secretary, maybe they were discussing, I do not know, about the vaccines; and they were procured.

In 2017, Doctor Kho who was at that time connected with the Food and Drug Administration received a call from the former Secretary who was the Secretary of Health that time and the instructions were clear—facilitate the registration of the Japanese Encephalitis vaccines. Can the honorable Department of Health, through the FDA and through Usec. Domingo, attest to this information?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Malinaw po ulit, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, bumili at pinili ang isang bakuna na hindi rehistrado sa Pilipinas. I am not discounting the information that I know that there are existing registered Japanese Encephalitis vaccines in the Philippines.

Next slide, please. It was very clear that the former Secretary who created the Ubial mess bought the vaccines without a license from our Food and Drug Administration.

Next slide, please. Naghanap ng remedy para masolusyunan dahil ayaw gamitin ng ating mga kasamahan at ayaw payagan noong ating mga eksperto dahil wala itong permit.

Next slide, please. It was accepted. Ang application ng bakuna na ito ay tiningnan ng FDA at ano po ang nakita? There were several deficiencies including a lack of GMP or a Good Manufacturing Practice certificate. This led to the disapproval of the application for license to sell the product in the Philippines.

Next slide, please. Ang atin pong kagalang-galang na kawani ng gobyerno in the person of Malen Ofrecio who was the Evaluator at that time was forced to just give it a permit to give a remedy to what Ubial has created. Malen, a graduate of the UP School of Pharmacy, has been in the FDA for six years. She is in fact, from what we heard, a daughter of a Presidential Security Guard. She resisted, by virtue of her principle, when she was transferred to a far-flung area, and ultimately, she resigned.

Next slide, please. This is the CPR for the Japanese Encephalitis vaccine applied on January 14, 2019, I am sorry for the error—released and approved on January 18, 2019—a whopping four days. Can the honorable Sponsor, distinguished Speaker, attest to this document?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Bakit po ba ito napayagan ng Departamento?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, after four years of completing the requirements of FDA ...

REP. GARIN (J.). Four days, honorable Sponsor, apologies for that. The application was on January 14, 2019. It was approved on January 18, 2019. Again, this is a medicine, an important vaccine that should have underwent thorough evaluation, a whopping four days. Alam ko po na may rason, kasi hindi papayag ang Departamento na gagawin ito, subalit ginawa ito at sa anong kadahilanan?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, the initial application was done in 2016, but the requirements were completed only on January 14, 2019.

REP. GARIN (J.). So, uulitin ko po, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, The application was done in 2016.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). My documents show that it was disapproved in 2017 because of lack of documents, specifically the good manufacturing practice.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, but ...

REP. GARIN (J.). Binili pa rin ni Secretary Ubial.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. During the time of Secretary Ubial, it was disapproved. But during the time of the new Secretary, they completed the requirements. So, they adhered to the FDA Law, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Am I correct in understanding that the response of the Sponsor and the honorable Secretary is that they are actually saying in-apply-an 2016, na-disapprove noong 2017, pinabili pa rin maski walang CPR? Noong pumasok si Secretary Duque, nandoon na iyong bakuna, kailangang gamitin at kailangang hanapan ng paraan dahil kailangan niyang ayusin ang nadatnan niya sa Departamento.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, I would laud the honorable Secretary in cleaning up the Ubial mess that has been created after I left the Department and he assumed office. But my question is this, if Secretary Duque were in the place of Secretary Ubial during that time, would he have allowed the same?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Definitely, Mr. Speaker, he would not have allowed the same.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor.

Nakakamangha po, nakakalungkot at nakakagalit na mayroong iilang tao na tila dinudungisan ang pangalan ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan. I have worked with the DOH family for a year. I have known them for a short time but I can vouch for the integrity of the hardworking career officials in the Department who are still there working until now. Pero ang masakit po, una ipinakita natin ang National Dengue Task Force, hindi na nga binili ang dengue test kits, ginamit pa sa sangkatutak na seminar, kumuha pa ng isang kumpanya na ang trabaho ay hindi kalusugan kundi nagbebenta ng cellphone load. Hay, Ginoo. Susmaryosep!

Mr. Speaker, it is not in my attitude but, when I realized what these people have done to the Department of Health, I have no remorse in saying (*expletive words*). Mga wa silay—they should not be in the government. Apologies to my Minority Leader and to the Speaker who are both Bishops. I am sorry for the bad words. It is just that I cannot contain it. That is why the Department is suffering because there are a few viruses inside, and I think the antidote to that is a more active Department that is moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Secretary, distinguished Sponsor, can you now assure us—kasi bumababa nang bumababa ang budget ng Departamento, the reducing budget of the Department of Health, I know it is not intentional, pero, we cannot accept this because people need health care. Will you commit to fight for a higher DOH budget? Ipaglalaban po ba natin ang pondo para sa kalusugan?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Opo, Mr. Speaker. Kaisa po ng ating interpellator na si Deputy Minority Leader, na mas ipaglaban at pataasin pa ang budget ng DOH para sa kalusugan ng ating mga mamamayan, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GARIN (J.). Will the honorable Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, agree to me that the people who take advantage of a crisis are pure evil?

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Estrella relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Evelina G. Escudero.

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

REP. GARIN (J.). Mas pinili nilang gamutin ang kanilang mga bulsa kaysa sa kalusugan ng masa. Tinatakot iyong tao, gagamitin ang pondo ng gobyerno, kikita ng libo-libo. They do not cure people. They just scare us, then they will use government funds to fatten their bank accounts.

Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, while I still see light at the end of the tunnel, I hope that you will all agree with me in saying that health is not for sale. And as they say it, “our health is our wealth,” a patient’s health is not for any doctor’s wealth.

I look forward to a more aggressive, hardworking DOH that will stand up firm and fight for what is due for our people.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Thank you, honorable Sponsor.

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

REP. BARONDA. Mme. Speaker, next to interpellate the Sponsor, may we recognize Representative Bayani F. Fernando of Marikina City.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Hon. Bayani F. Fernando of Marikina City is now recognized.

REP. FERNANDO. Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, thank you very much.

Alam ninyo, tayo, lalo tayong lahat, sa kabila ng lahat ng pinag-uusapan nating PhilHealth at kung ano-ano mang programa ng Department of Health

at ng iba’t ibang mga lokal na pamahalaan, lahat ng gagawin natin ay para sa kalusugan ng mga tao, pero sa bandang huli, bago tayo mapunta sa langit man o sa impiyerno, dadaan tayong lahat sa ospital. Kaya itong aking sasabihin sa inyo, itong aking manifestation for today is about hospital funds that we need, para ayusin natin ang mga ospital natin.

So, may I proceed immediately to my question? This is going to be very short. How much was the amount appropriated by Congress to the Department of Health for the public Health Facilities Enhancement Program or HFEP in 2018?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. For 2018, Mme. Speaker, it was P30 billion.

REP. FERNANDO. Thirty billion, and were you able to obligate all of these allotted funds in 2018?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Ninety-four percent obligated, Mme. Speaker.

REP. FERNANDO. That is good. That is good performance, indeed. How much was the appropriation for this current year of 2019?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Fifteen billion, Mme. Speaker.

REP. FERNANDO. And are you confident that you can also obligate this fund on or before December 31, 2019?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Definitely, Mme. Speaker.

REP. FERNANDO. Is the HFEP Program a necessity to improve the service delivery of the Department to our people?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Absolutely, Mme. Speaker.

REP. FERNANDO. Then, how much is the proposed appropriation for this Health Facilities Enhancement Program for the year 2020?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. The Department proposed P15 billion, Mme. Speaker, but the DBM only approved P5.4 billion.

REP. FERNANDO. So, there was a decrease? What could be the compelling reason for the significant decrease in the proposal?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, it was due to the alleged low obligation rate. But considering that

the budget was only passed last April, definitely the DOH can obligate all remaining funds before December, Mme. Speaker.

REP. FERNANDO. Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, please be reminded that last Congress, there were several bills passed by this august Body, increasing bed capacity of several Department of Health supervised hospitals and district hospitals in the entire country; and these are now laws approved by our dear President Rodrigo R. Duterte.

With these increase in bed capacity, it follows that these hospitals need to construct new buildings or improve their building expansion to accommodate the increase in their bed capacity and include additional hospital equipments like x-ray machines, 2D echos and others.

I am pretty sure that there were several requests submitted by these hospitals to the Department to fund the upgrading of their buildings and facilities. Am I correct, Mr. distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

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

REP. FERNANDO. In this situation, Mme. Speaker, Your Honor, this august Body has all the reasons to increase the allocations for this particular program, so that it will be able to cope with the demand of our health sector, and the Department of Health to further improve its service delivery to our people.

What is the position of the agency on this matter, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Absolutely, Mme. Speaker. The Department wants to restore the budget that was intended to be allocated for the construction of the hospitals, Mme. Speaker.

REP. FERNANDO. I, therefore, move, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, to increase the budget of this HFEP by reinstituting the original proposed budget of the Department of Health in the amount of P9.58 billion or an additional P5.4 billion. And at the proper time, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, this Representation will submit this institutional amendment to the budget of the Department of Health along this program. Can I have the support of the distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Absolutely, Mme. Speaker. This Representation also expects that a higher allocation will be given, maybe higher than P9 billion. If we can make it P15 billion the better, Mme. Speaker.

REP. FERNANDO. With this positive response, I will rest my case, Mme. Speaker. Thank you and good afternoon.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Thank you to the Gentleman, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. BARONDA. Mme. Speaker, next to interpellate is Hon. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat of BAYAN MUNA Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Hon. Eufemia “Ka Femia” C. Cullamat is now recognized.

REP. CULLAMAT. Maraming salamat, Gng. Ispiker.

Salamat po. Nagpapasalamat po ako sa DOH datos na ibinigay, na hiningi ko noong una, tapos sa datos po na ibinigay ninyo tungkol sa bilang ng mga katutubo na nakatanggap ng serbisyong pangkalusugan mula 2012 hanggang 2018. Nilista po ninyo ito batay sa IP group. Nais ko lang pong linawin dahil inilagay dito ang bilang ng beneficiary ng tribong Manobo, at naglagay din kayo ng bilang para sa grupo na Lumad. May Lumad dito na nalagay.

Ang Lumad ay kolektibong tawag sa iba’t ibang katutubo ng Mindanao. Ang tribong Manobo, kung saan ako napapabilang, ay bahagi ng tinatawag nating Lumad. Tapos, ang tanong ko po, bakit iba ang pagkalagay dito ng Lumad na parang kabilang siya sa grupo, pero ito po ay—lilinawin natin na ito po ay isang kolektibong katawagan ng katutubo sa buong Mindanao. Halimbawa, sa Caraga Region, partikular po sa Caraga Region, may limang ethnolinguistic na grupo na ito ay tinatawag natin na Lumad. At ito iyong parang naguguluhan ako sa datos na ito. Bakit parang iba iyong Lumad? May nalagay dito na Lumad, tapos, may 22,038 po iyong ano. Bakit may nalagay dito na Lumad gayong ito ay isang kolektibong katawagan ng katutubo, Gng. Ispiker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, kailangan ko po munang makita iyong dokumento. Mukha pong naunang naipadalang dokumento sa ating kapatid na si Ka Femia. Maaari ko po sanang makita rin iyong dokumento, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, maaari po bang maulit iyong katanungan ng ating Party-List Representative Ka Femia, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CULLAMAT. Gng. Ispiker, ang sinasabi dito ay may nakalista na IP—batay sa IP group—at gusto ko lang pong linawin itong Lumad na nalagay dito na ito ay iyong sinasabi na iyong kolektibo ito na katawagan ng katutubo sa buong Mindanao.

Halimbawa, partikular doon sa isang rehiyon ng Mindanao sa Caraga Region ay mayroon siyang limang grupo na ito iyong tinatawag na Lumad, itong Manobo, Talaandig, Mamanwa, Higaonon at saka Banwaon. Ito iyong parang tinatawag natin sa buo na Lumad. Kaya ako nagtaka na bakit dito nalagay ang Lumad at may iba siyang bilang sa budget.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, ako po ay nagpapasalamat sa napakagandang edukasyon na ngayon ay natanggap natin kay Ka Femia, at iyon pong edukasyong ito ay maituturo rin natin sa buong DOH para mas maayos na magawa iyong listahan ng ating mga kapatid na IPs, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CULLAMAT. Mme. Speaker, ang susunod ko po na tanong ay sa datos ninyo mula 2012 hanggang 2018. Sa loob ng pitong taon ay mayroong 128,189 na katutubo na nakatanggap ng serbisyong pangkalusugan.

Sa taong 2018, may 41,212 na katutubo ang naabot nito. Tinatayang hindi bababa sa 14 million ang bilang ng mga katutubo sa buong Pilipinas batay sa United Nations Development Programme noong 2013. Sa pitong taon na datos ng DOH, hindi pa aabot ng 1 percent ng kabuuang bilang ng mga IP ang nakakatanggap ng serbisyong pangkalusugan.

Batay sa karanasan, doon mismo sa aming probinsya, partikular sa lungsod kung saan ako naroon ay kulang na kulang po iyong gamot doon sa RHU, doon sa aming munisipyo, ngunit sa halip ay laganaap iyong kakulangan talaga ng serbisyong pangkalusugan sa ibang mga komunidad ng IP, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, dodoblehin po ng Department of Health ang kanyang oras upang mas mapagbigyan ng maganda at kalidad na serbisyo ang ating mga kapatid na katutubo dahil bawat Pilipino po talaga ay nararapat na tumanggap ng kalidad na serbisyo, lalong-lalo na sa kalusugan ngayon, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CULLAMAT. Mme. Speaker, ang isa ko pa pong concern dito ay hinggil sa iyong pagkakulong ng rehiyon ay may mga rehiyon dito na hindi talaga naisali iyong, halimbawa, sa Davao del Sur at saka sa Surigao del Sur. Hindi po nalagay dito ang bilang ng mga IP doon. Doon sa Surigao del Sur, particular doon sa Surigao del Sur lang talaga na nakuha natin ang datos doon na hindi siya bababa sa 300 families at saka 2,000 individuals at hindi natin nakita dito sa datos na ito, at saka iyong sa Davao del Sur din na kung saan mayroon din naitala natin doon na mga populasyon ng mga katutubo.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, mas sisiyasatin po ng Department of Health ang mga datos

upang mas maayos nating maibigay iyong pangkalahatan at totoong datos para sa pangangailangan ng ating mga kapatid na katutubo, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CULLAMAT. Ang isa pang katanungan ko, Mme. Speaker, ay ito bang mga budget ng mga probinsyang ito—kasi alam natin na buo iyong pag-ano natin ng budget—ang budget na ito ng probinsiya na wala dito sa datos at saka itong budget ng Lumad na parang nakikita natin na hindi dapat ganoon, saan ba ngayon ang pondong ito?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, maaari po bang ulitin ng ating kapatid na Ka Femia ang kanyang katanungan, Mme. Speaker?

REP. CULLAMAT. Ang pondo ng DOH ay siyempre, sa kabuuan, sa lahat ng bahagi ng ating bansa at siyempre, kabilang dito iyong budget ng Lumad sa Surigao del Sur na wala dito, at sa Davao del Sur din na hindi po natin nakikita dito sa dokumento, at saka itong Lumad na iniba—may sariling bilang siya na may halagang P22,338, ang tanong ko po ay, saan po ba ang naglagay ng pondong ito, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, ang mga kapatid po nating Lumad ay nabibigyan ng karagdagang pagtingin lalong-lalo na sa DOH, ngunit iyong pondo po na hinahanap ng ating distinguished colleague na si Ka Femia ay kasama na sa pondo ng bawat rehiyon, Mme. Speaker. Sa madaling salita po, Mme. Speaker, hindi po nakahiwalay iyon para sa Lumad. Nakasama po ito sa pangkalahatang budget ng isang rehiyon, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CULLAMAT. So, ibig sabihin, ang budget po ng mga IPs sa bawat province ay nandoon pa talaga sa DOH, ng provincial DOH.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Binibigyan po—inuulit ko po, Mme. Speaker, binibigyan po ng dagdag na pagtingin ang ating mga kapatid na IPs ngunit iyong kanila pong budget ay kasama ng budget ng lahat ng Pilipino. Ang ibig sabihin po, Mme. Speaker, hindi po hinihiwalay iyong para sa IP at hindi hinihiwalay iyong para sa hindi IP. Magkasama po iyan, pero binibigyan po ng karagdagang pagtingin o mas mabilis na pag-ayuda kapag sa kapatid nating IPs, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CULLAMAT. Maraming salamat, Mme. Speaker, at maraming salamat—aasahan po natin na ang mga IP bilang bahagi ng mamamayang Pilipino, hindi po sana sila maiwan doon sa kung anuman ang mga serbisyo ng ating pamahalaan dahil iyon na nga at iyon na po, maraming salamat, Mme. Speaker, at maraming salamat.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, kinikilala po ng Departamentong ito na ang yaman ng bansang Pilipinas ay ang ating mga IPs. Ipinagmamalaki po sila ng Departamentong ito, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CULLAMAT. Salamat.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BARONDA. Mme. Speaker. Thank you so much, Ka Femia.

Next to interpellate the Sponsor is Rep. France L. Castro of ACT TEACHERS Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Rep. France Castro of the ...

REP. BARONDA. Rep. Ferdinand R. Gaité, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Representative Gaité is now recognized.

REP. GAITE. Mme. Speaker, maraming salamat po. Sa ating kapita-pitagang Sponsor ng budget para sa Department of Health, pahihintulutan ba ang Kinatawang ito na magtanong ng ilang clarifications hinggil sa budget ng Department of Health?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Isang karangalan po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Sabi ni Mahatma Ghandi, "It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver". Ngunit ngayon kailangan itong pieces of gold and silver o yaman ng bayan para maibigay ang napakahalagang serbisyong pangkalusugan.

Ngunit ngayon, sa harap ng lumalalang sitwasyong pangkalusugan, paliit nang paliit ang budget para sa kalusugan kaya po nakikita natin na sa halip na bigyan ng totoong prayoridad ang sinasabing P4.1 trillion budget para sa taong 2020, makikita natin na iyong social services lalo na ang serbisyong pangkalusugan ang siyang isa sa mga nag-suffer ng pagbaba ng halaga na maaaring ilaan dito.

May inihanda po kami na ilang powerpoint presentation, nakahanda na po ba? Sige po, habang inihahanda, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Speaker, at sa ating Kagalang-galang na Sponsor, sa budget na P4.1 trillion para sa 2020, tumaas, malinaw na tumaas. Tumaas ng 11.96 percent pero kabaliktaran sa hanay ng social services. Ang total health expenditures ay nag-suffer ng 4.97 percent na pagbaba taliwas doon sa sinasabing ang budget ay para sa serbisyong panlipunan.

Sa buong Department of Health, malinaw din ang pagbaba. Halos 10 porsyento ang ibinagsak ng kabuuang Department of Health budget kung ihahambing sa 2019 na nakabatay sa General Appropriations Act.

At makikita natin na kahit sa opisina ng Department of Health, iyong Health Facilities Enhancement Program, nakita rin natin kung paano very drastic ang pagbaba ng mga naturang program budgets. Katanungan po, paano pa ba magagawa ng Department of Health ang kaniyang sinumpaang tungkulin kung ganito na lamang ang pagbagsak ng halagang inilalaan para sa budget ng Department of Health, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, magagawa pa rin po ng Department of Health, ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan, ang kaniyang mandato ngunit hindi po kasingganda iyong kaniyang serbisyo ng dahil sa kakulangan ng budget.

Mas gaganda po iyong serbisyo ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan kung madadagdagan po natin iyong budget at gaya po ng ng bilin ng ating Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano na kailangan talaga nating i-augment o dagdagan iyong budget upang makapagbigay ng kalidad na serbisyo sa bawat Pilipino, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker. Sa ganitong sitwasyon, nakikita na natin na hindi ngayon lamang bumaba ang budget ng Department of Health. Sa mga nakaraang taon—puwede po ipakita iyong susunod na slide—makikita po na mula po 2016, except for 2018, nakita na natin iyong trend ng pagbagsak ng inilalaan na budget para sa Department of Health.

Masasabi ba natin na talagang trend na ito? Cut, cut, cuts ba ang polisiya para sa serbisyong pangkalusugan, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, inaasahan po nating maititigil natin iyong sinasabing trend na ito sapagkat hindi po makakatulong sa ating bansa ang patuloy na pagbagsak ng ating pondo sa health.

Kaya nga po, kagaya po ng sinabi ko kanina, tutulungan po tayo ng ating Speaker, pati po ng lahat ng ating mga kasama dito sa malaking kapulungan na madagdagan iyong ating budget upang matigil po natin itong masamang trend na ito, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Pero malinaw, Mr. Sponsor, na iyon na iyong aktwal na effect ng budget cuts sa serbisyong pangkalusugan.

Totoo naman, nangako ang ating kagalang-galang na Speaker of the House, ngunit sa aktwal, kita natin na iyong malubhang pagbaba na may epekto na sa nagaganap ngayon tulad ng mga naunang tagapagsalita, si Kinatawang Janette L. Garin at gayundin ang iba pa na nakita na iyong palubhang kalagayan. Ang sabi nga,

iyong ating health services ay sickly na o lumalala iyong kalagayan ng serbisyong pangkalusugan.

Kaya po, kung ito lamang ang pagbabatayan natin, iyong budget na inilalaan para sa serbisyong pangkalusugan, malinaw na pababa ang prayoridad dahil malinaw naman na ang budget ay siyang reflection ng prayoridad ng pamahalaan. Kumbaga, kung ano ang diin o prayoridad ng pamahalaan, doon niya ilalagay ang pondo ng gobyerno. Lumalabas na hindi prayoridad ang serbisyong pangkalusugan. Tama po ba, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, ako po ay nakikiisa sa sentimyento ng ating Honorable Gaité at kasama po ang Representasyong ito na makikipaglaban para sa karagdagang pondo para sa kalusugan dahil hindi natin maaaring pabayaang iyang ating mga kababayan.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po.

Tama po at pare-pareho ang ating pananaw at tindig na sa mga batayan ng serbisyong panlipunan—pangkalusugan, edukasyon, at pabahay—dapat talagang nagre-reflect doon sa budget, na ito ang binibigyan ng mas maraming, sabi nga ni Mahatma Gandhi, mas maraming gold at silver. Pero kabaligtaran, hindi iyan ang nagiging prayoridad.

Next slide, please.

So dito rin po, sa usapin ng mga programa ng ating ahensiya para sa serbisyong pangkalusugan, makikita natin ang malubhang pagbaba sa mahahalagang programa na ipinatutupad ng Department of Health. Sa usapin ng environment and occupational health and safety, bumaba sa Health Facilities Enhancement Program, bumaba nang 62 percent. Sa HRH Deployment or Human Resource for Health and Deployment, bumaba rin ng 71 percent. Bumaba rin ang Public Health Management Program ng 17 percent. Gayon na rin sa Environment and Occupational Health Subprogram na bumaba ng 93 percent. At iyong binabanggit kanina hinggil sa Immunization Program, bumaba rin slightly ng 0.08 percent. Ganoon din sa ating Family Health Sub-Program, bumaba nang 9.83 percent. At iyong ito, napakamainit na usapin rin, iyong Elimination of Infectious Disease Sub-Program, bumaba rin ng 26.86 percent. So, kung titingnan lang natin dito, kasama na sa Non-Communicable Disease Program at iba pa, lahat ay nag-suffer ng reduction. At nakababahala, sapagkat ito ang ilan sa mga pangunahing programa ng naturang ahensiya.

Kung kaya't marami kaming tanong na paano ba maipapaliwanag itong mga reductions na ito, na despite iyong palalang sitwasyon sa mga serbisyong pangkalusugan, unprecedented iyong paglaki ng bilang ng affected ng dengue, nagkakaroon ng

outbreak pa na measles, at iba pa. Paano iyon maipapaliwanag na lumiliit iyong budget pero dumadami ang nangangailangan ng serbisyo mula sa gobyerno lalo na sa serbisyong pangkalusugan, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Wala pong kapalinawagan, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Ang sakit pakinggan na walang kapalinawagan. Sabi nga natin ay kailangang-kailangan ang programang ito ng mamamayang Pilipino. Tulad na rin sa mga ibang bansa, napakataas ng prayoridad na ito, pero sa ating bansang Pilipinas, tila na lamang iyong budget na inilalaan natin para sa ating serbisyong pangkalusugan ay hindi nasa top priority ng pamahalaan.

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Makikita natin na mayroon naman daw pagtaas sa budget para sa tinatawag na mga ospital. Ayon sa nakuha naming ilang reports, may ilang pagtaas ng budget para sa mga ilang ospital. Ngunit, naniniwala ang Kinatawang ito, Mme. Speaker, at gayundin sa ating Sponsor, na hindi pa rin sapat ang budget dahil alam naman natin na mismo ang mga international institutions tulad ng United Nations at World Health Organization, mayroon silang tinatawag na ideal ratios kung magkano ba dapat ang ilalaan ng gobyerno o mga gobyerno bilang bahagi ng budget batay sa kanilang gross national product. Sabi nga dito, at least 5 percent ng ating gross national product ang inilalaan sa serbisyong pangkalusugan.

Sa kasalukuyan po ba, ilang porsyento ba sa tantiya ninyo ng ating gross national product ang napupunta sa serbisyong pangkalusugan, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. It is 4.5 percent, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Is that 4.5 percent, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

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

REP. GAITE. Tama po. Batay rin sa mga ilang pag-aaral, ang malaking bahagi nito ay napupunta po sa PhilHealth. Tama po ba ako, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, 15 percent lamang po ang natatanggap ng PhilHealth na hati sa budget ng Department of Health. Pangatlo po ito sa pinakamalaking natatanggap mula sa Department of Health, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po sa paglililina, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, sa ating nakitang ilang government hospitals, kasama na dito ang East Avenue Medical Center, National Center for Mental Health, National Children's Hospital, Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital and several others, napakalayo po noong kanilang proposed budget or as formulated ngayon sa ilalim ng NEP. For example, sa East Avenue Medical Center, doon sa kanilang sinumeteng P1.240 billion na budget, na-cut ito by around 10 percent. Gayundin sa National Center for Mental Health, ang dating P5.4 billion budget nila ay P1.1 billion na lang or a slash of about 78 percent. Ang National Children's Hospital na humingi ng P1.37 billion na budget ay ginawa na lang P495 million or a cut of 64 percent. Ito, isang mahalaga, ang Research Institute for Tropical Medicine, nag-suffer rin ng reduction by 14 percent. From P606 million na proposed budget, ang nakapaloob lamang sa NEP ay P519 million na budget. Marami pang ibang ahensya na ganoon din ang kaawa-awang sitwasyon, na-slash din ang budget.

Papaano po maipapaliwanag ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, ang sitwasyon, na necessary itong budget para maigawad ang tamang serbisyo, adequate na serbisyo sa ating mga mamamayan?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, parehas po kami ng sentimyento ng ating tagapagtanong, si Honorable Gaite, na kailangan talagang maibalik ang mga pondong ito. Malungkot man po ang Kagawaran ng Kalusugan dahil hindi na-aprubahan iyong inilahad na kagustuhan ng Departamento, patuloy pa rin po kaming makikipaglaban para sa mas mataas na budget para sa Department of Health, Mme. Speaker.

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

Sa kabuuan, maraming programs ang Department of Health na malubhang binawasan sa kani-kanilang proposed budgets. Kaya't hindi lamang sa usapin ng programs, ang isang nakakabahala rin po, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, ay iyong pagkawala ng Capital Outlay. Alam po naman natin na sa serbisyong pangkalusugan, napakahalaga ng facilities, napakahalaga ng equipment, lalo na sa panahon ng pagbabago ng mga teknolohiya para maibigay ang serbisyo. Noong taong 2010 pa nang huling makakuha ang lahat ng ospital ng regular na Capital Outlay and after that, wala na po.

Ngayong 2020, lahat halos ng hospital ay walang Capital Outlay. Kapag sinabing Capital Outlay, ito po iyong buildings, facilities, equipment at iba pa. Bagama't sabi rin naman sa pagpapaliwanag sa briefing sa ating mga Kinatawan, may halagang nasa ilalim ng HFEP.

Ngayon po, ano ang kaibahan kapag inilagay ang Capital Outlay direkta sa ospital at kapag ang pondo ay inilagay sa Department of Health, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, maari po bang ulitin ni Representative Gaite ang kanyang katanungan?

REP. GAITE. Gladly po. Ano ang kaibahan kapag inilagay ang Capital Outlay direkta sa ospital at kapag ang pondo ay inilagay sa Department of Health, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Kategorya lamang po ang mag-iiba, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Ano po ang ibig sabihin ng nag-iiba lang po ang kategorya? Ibig sabihin nito kaya pa rin ibili ito para sa ating pangangailangan sa Capital Outlay, tama po ba, Mme. Speaker?

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

REP. GAITE. May mga pag-aaral ba ang Department of Health kung saan higit na napapakinabangan o nagagamit ang pondo para sa Capital Outlay—kung direkta ba itong inilagay sa budget ng ospital o sa bilyon-bilyong inilagay sa HFEP?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Sigurado po, Mme. Speaker, na patuloy ang pag-aaral ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan tungkol sa usaping ito, ngunit depende po sa preperensya o kagustuhan ng mga gumagawa ng mga budget, lalong-lalo na ng DBM kung saan po natin inilagay ito. Bilang mga Kinatawan na gumagawa ng batas para sa Budget, maaari po tayong magbigay ng ating mga panaghoy at kagustuhan sa paglalathala ng Budget na ito, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, kaya ko po naitanong iyan, kasi maraming adverse findings ang Commission on Audit sa HFEP, kabilang na ang mga proyektong substandard—hindi angkop, hindi magamit, hindi kailangan at minsan hindi pa matapus-tapos ang mga proyektong ito. Bakit hindi ito direktang ibigay at isama sa agency allotment ng pampublikong ospital, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, mas nadadalian po at nasisimplihan sa sistema na i-monitor ng Kagawaran ang mga pagawain kung matagumpay itong napagawa o hindi pa kung ito ay nasa central office. Bagama't ako rin po ay umaayon sa ating distinguished colleague, Representative Gaite, na maaari rin naman itong maipamahaging direkta sa mga ospital, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. Nakakabahala kasi nga po napakaraming taon nang umiral ang HFEP, nagkakaroon pa rin ng maraming reklamo sa antas ng mga ospital. Kahit dito sa ating mga Kinatawan sa Kongreso, maraming reklamo sa binabanggit na kakulangan na mga gamit, kung kaya't hindi naibibigay ang dapat na inilalaan sa serbisyo sa ating mamamayan. Nabanggit nga sa mga kasamahan natin na naririto ngayon mula sa Alliance of Health Workers, example po nila, sa Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital, kulang na kulang iyong respirators. Iyong respirators kailangan po, bahagi ito sa Capital Outlay na normally kapag may mga pangangailangan ang mga pasyente nito, kailangan na i-assist ang breathing, dahil sa kakulangan ng respirators, may namamatay na mga pasyente bunga ng kakulangan ng ganitong basic equipment para sa mga pasyente na nangangailangan ng serbisyo. Hindi ba high time na baguhin natin ang sistema ng allocation, para mismo iyong mga ospital na nangangailangan ng equipment o Capital Outlay ay maibigay sa kanila iyong pangangailangan batay sa kondisyon ng kalagayan ng facilities na ito, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Napakahalaga at napakaganda po ng suhestiyon ng ating interpellator, Mme. Speaker, at siguradong ikokonsidera ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan ang napakagandang suhestiyon na ito, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Patungkol po sa Capital Outlay, may isa pa akong katanungan. Paano ba iyong sistema ng pamimili o pagpapasiya kung anong proyekto ang popondohan sa ilalim ng HFEP, lalo na ang mga programang ito na nasa ilalim ng barangay at RHUs, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Unang-una po, Mme. Speaker, mayroon munang experts na mag-a-assess sa bawat ospital upang malaman ang pangangailangan nito. Pangalawa po, base sa assessment detail at assessment plan, magkakaroon po ng mga paunang prayoridad hanggang sa dulo ang mga ospital na natapos na sa needs assessment. Ganoon po mula sa umpisa hanggang sa dulo, hangga't aabutan ng budget, bibigyan ang mga ospital na ito. Bagama't hindi po lahat ng kahilingan ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan ay napagbibigyan sa budget, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Iyong BHS po ba, Mr. Sponsor, or iyong RHU personnel ay may papel sa pagpapasiya o pagdedesisyon ng mga naturang Capital Outlay expenditures, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mayroon po silang boses, Mme. Speaker, sapagkat sila ang nandoon sa Barangay

Health Stations at Rural Health Units. Kaya iyong pagbibigay po ng suhestiyon kung ano ang kailangan nila ay nandoon po ang kanilang pagkakataon na magbigay ng kanilang panaghoy at pangangailangan sa lahat ng mga miyembro ng assement team ng Department of Health, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. Kaya ko rin po naitanong iyan, may mga ilang obserbasyon na lumabas na may mga proyektong inilaan, may mga budget na inilaan sa mga proyektong hindi angkop sa mga pangangailangan ng isang health facility. Halimbawa po, sangkatutak na microscopes, dental chairs na hindi magkasya sa health station at iba pa.

Totoo bang napag-aralang maigi kung ano ang karapat-dapat na Capital Outlay para sa ating health facilities? Sapagkat sabi nga natin, bawat piso na inilalaan ay dapat gamitin sa angkop at pinakamasusing paraan. Ngunit kung hindi rin magagamit ang mga nabanggit na Capital Outlay equipment ay nasasayang rin lang po. Tama po ba, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, maaari po bang magkaroon ng datos ang Representasyong ito, pati na ang DOH, at siguradong paiimbestigahan po ng DOH ang pangyayaring ito na nagkaroon ng mga sobrang gamit na hindi naman pala kailangan. Maaari po bang malaman, Mme. Speaker, kung kailan po nangyari ito at kung saan?

REP. GAITE. Sige po at isu-supply namin iyan sapagkat mismo ang ating mga manggagawang pangkalusugan ang naghapag ng ganitong mga obserbasyon—na nakita nilang maraming gamit ang nasayang na napunta sana sa mas importanteng pangangailangan ng mga pasilidad. Sa tingin nila, maaaring nai-prioritize sana ito sa ibang mga gamit.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Maraming salamat po.

REP. GAITE. Ang isa pang concern ng Kinatawang ito, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, iyong kaltas sa human resource health deployment at usapin ng manggagawang pangkalusugan. Ilan po ba ngayon ang kabuuang manggagawang pangkalusugan sa ilalim ng Department of Health, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Humigit-kumulang 76,000, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Pitumpu't-anim na libo, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Humigit-kumulang po.

REP. GAITE. Ilan po ba ang populasyon ng Pilipinas ngayon?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Around 110 million na po yata, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Mukhang talagang napakalayo kung ating susuriin.

Ayon kasi sa Department of Health, noong budget briefing sa Committee on Appropriations, ang ibang pondo para sa HRH deployment ay nasa Miscellaneous Personnel Benefit Fund or MPBF. Magkano po ang halagang partikular na nakalaan sa HRH deployment mula sa MPBF, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, ang nasa budget pa lamang po ng DOH sa ngayon ay P2.4 billion. Ngunit kakailanganin pa po na karagdagan na mahigit P7 bilyon para makumpleto ang budget na ito, Mme. Speaker.

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

Kung idadagdag iyong nabanggit ninyong halaga sa nakalaan sa ilalim ng budget sa HRH ng DOH, magkano ang kabuuan para sa programa ng Human Resource Health Deployment Program ng Department of Health, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, ang pangkalahatan pong pangangailangan ay P16 billion.

REP. GAITE. Sixteen billion, Mr. Sponsor, pero...

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Tama po.

REP. GAITE. ...ang budget ay napakaliit kung titingnan iyong budget for HRH deployment. Papaano po ba Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, ang proseso ng pag-hire ng HRH deployment—ano po ang mga gawain nila at ikalawa po, ano ang kaibahan ng kanilang gawain sa iba pa nating health workers na ina-assign sa iba't ibang komunidad, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, wala pong pagkakaiba ang trabaho ng HRH personnel sa pangkaraniwan na manggagawa ng Kalusugan, ngunit ang isang HRH personnel po, Mme. Speaker, ay isang karagdagan na personnel na tulong sa ating mga local governments na kulang po talaga sa mga health professionals, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po sa kasagutan. Matanong ko lang po, sila po ba ay mga regular o kontraktwal na empleyado, Mr. Sponsor, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Kontraktwal po sila, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Kontraktwal, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Kumpleto po ng lahat ng social security benefits pero wala silang security of tenure, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Salamat po sa kasagutan pero...

REP. SY-ALVARADO. At hinihiling po natin na dumating iyong panahon na sila ay magiging regular lahat, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po sa inyong proposal sapagkat iyan rin po iyong ating inuunawa sapagkat alam naman natin na regular ang pagbibigay serbisyong pangkalusugan, hindi po kontraktwal na pag sa pana-panahon lamang. Alam natin hindi lang ito curative pero may preventive rin at ibang mga mahahalagang tungkulin para maibsan iyong dumaraming uri ng sakit na lumalaganap sa kasalukuyan.

May hakbang po ba na ginagawa ngayon kasi po nakita po namin, tama po ba iyong datos na naka-post—iyung lumalabas po? Ayon sa nakuha naming bilang, sa 76,000 na ating kabuuang personnel complement ng naturang ahensya, very significant po na mahigit 11,884 or more than 9 percent ng kabuuang personnel complement ng Department of Health ay hindi regular. Ano po ang dahilan bakit ganito po iyong sitwasyon na bagama't regular ang trabaho ng ating mga manggagawang pangkalusugan, kontraktwal ang pagturing sa marami nating mga manggagawang pangkalusugan, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, bagamat ninanais po talaga ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan na lahat ng kawani nito ay maging regular, may ilan-ilan po sa ating mga kawani na hindi pa nakakapasa sa quality [qualification] standards ng Civil Service kaya po hindi pa sila nabibigyan ng regular na posisyon ngunit kasama po ang Kagawarang ito na umaasa at nananalangin na kung maaari lamang lahat ay pumasa sa Civil Service upang mabigyan ng karampatang training at maging regular iyong mga nasabing posisyong ito, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Sponsor. Mayroon na po bang ginagawang hakbang sa Department of Budget and Management na hilingin na iyong mga posisyong sa kasalukuyan ay hindi regular ay gawing regular? Para iyong ating mga empleyadong sa kasalukuyan ay hindi regular ay matamasa na rin iyong matagal nilang inaasam na magkaroon ng kasiguruhan sa trabaho. Dahil alam naman natin mas

madalas kaysa hindi ang problema po ay kakulangan ng mga plantilla positions, liban po sa nabanggit ng ating Sponsor, na iyong mismo na ating mga empleyado ay may kakulangan sa tinatawag na qualification standards tulad ng eligibility, trainings, educational attainment at iba pa.

So, mayroon na ba po bang ginagawa ang ating Kagawaran para matulungan iyong ating mga kontraktwal na manggagawa?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Marami pong requests, Mme. Speaker, ang Kagawaran ng Kalusugan sa DBM na maragdagan ang mga plantilla positions upang makumpleto po ang pangangailangan, hindi lamang ng mga empleyo kung hindi para po makumpleto iyong serbisyo at maayos na serbisyo para sa buong bansang Pilipinas, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Masarap pong pakinggan iyong ginagawang hakbang na ito sapagka't ang ating mga manggagawang pangkalusugan na nagbibigay ng serbisyo para sa ating mamamayan, sila mismo ay nagkakasakit dahil overworked and underpaid. Pinagkakaitan pa ng karapatan sa kasiguruhan sa trabaho.

Bilang pagsasara dahil medyo mahaba-haba na po ang aking pagsasalita rito ngayong hapon, malinaw na po na kulang na nga at kinakaltasan pa ang budget ng Kalusugan. Kung tunay ngang prayoridad ito, hindi dapat kinakaltasan ang budget para sa ating mga mamamayan. Lalo itong mahalaga sa harap ng kalunos-lunos na sitwasyon ng pangkalusugan para sa ating mga mamamayan. Kasabay dapat na kinakalinga ang mga manggagawang pangkalusugan na silang tagapagbigay ng serbisyo sa ating mamamayan. Sa halip na kaltasan, dapat paglaanan ng sapat na budget ang direktang serbisyo sa pamamagitan ng sapat na Personnel Services, Maintenance and Other Operating Expense at Capital Outlay sa ating mga pampublikong ospital, public health programs, at pagreregularisa ng mga kasalukuyang hindi regular na mga empleyado.

Mariin po na minumungkahi ng Kinatawang ito na i-restore ang lahat ng budget na kinaltas sa Department of Health para makatulong sa ating mga mamamayan na serbisyong dapat iginagawad ng Department of Health. Sang-ayon po ba ang ating Sponsor sa panukalang budget ng Department of Health dito sa mungkahi at mariin na mungkahi na isinusulong ng Kinatawang ito, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mariin rin po ang aking pagtango at pag-ayon sa mga mungkahi ng ating kapatid, Representative Gaité, para sa pagbabalik ng budget ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan, Mme. Speaker, at patuloy pong nagpapasalamat ang Kagawaran ito kasama po ng daan-daang milyong Pilipino sa pagtatanong ng ating kapatid na Representative Gaité, Mme. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker, sa pagkakataon at isang honor po na magkaroon tayo ng ganitong talakayan sa isang napakahalangang serbisyo na iginagawad natin sa ating mga mamamayan. Umasa kayo na ang Kinatawang ito ay tuloy-tuloy na tutulong upang ang serbisyong pangkalusugan ay magbigyan ng sapat na pondo na tulad nga—sinabi nga ni Mahatma Gandhi iyong, silver and gold, pilak at ginto ay kailangan para maibigay ang tamang serbisyo sa mamamayan. . Maraming salamat po, Mr. Sponsor. Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker.

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

REP. BARONDA. Thank you so much Honorable Gaité. Mme. Speaker, I move to recognize Hon. Arnolfo “Arnie” A. Teves Jr. from the Third District of Negros Oriental for his manifestation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Hon. Arnie Teves of Negros Oriental is now recognized.

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

Gusto ko lang matanong, Mme. Speaker, kung alam ng DOH na karamihan sa dengue patients nireresetahan ng antibiotic?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, bawal po iyon at labag po sa guidelines ng DOH iyong pagreseta ng antibiotics para sa dengue patients. At, aalamin po nang masugid ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan kung saan po nangyari ang sinasabi ng ating iniidolng Representante, Mme. Speaker.

REP. TEVES. Ang first-hand experience ko, sa amin sa Negros Oriental, sa provincial hospitals, sa mga district hospitals, ang daming humihingi sa akin ng tulong para sa sakit na dengue na nireresetahan ng antibiotic. I do not want to be parochial. Ang request ko, sana i-check ninyo sa buong bansa iyong patient records kung gaano kadami ang may sakit na dengue na nireresetahan ng antibiotics. Sa tingin ko kasi, ginagawa itong raket, source ng pinagkakakitaan at kawawa iyong mahihirap nating mga kababayan.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, ang buong bansa po ay may kalawakan po ang sakop nito, Mme. Speaker, pero nakababahala po iyong sinabi ni idolng Rep. Arnie Teves, kaya ito po ay iimbestigahan nang masugid ng Departamento ng Kalusugan, Mme. Speaker.

REP. TEVES. Okay. I hope you can give us records kung ilan sa mga dengue patients were prescribed with antibiotics in the whole country.

That is all, Mme. Speaker. Thank you, everybody.

REP. BARONDA. Thank you so much.

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

REP. BARONDA. Thank you so much, Hon. Arnie Teves.

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

REP. BARONDA. Mme. Speaker, the next to interpellate the Sponsor is Hon. France L. Castro of ACT TEACHERS Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Hon. France Castro of ACT TEACHERS Party-List is now recognized.

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

So, iyon po bang ating Sponsor ay papayag na makapag-raise ng ilang mga concerns ang Kinatawang ito?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Masayang-masaya po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Salamat.

Mayroon po, Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor, na mga ospital na napansin natin sa budget ay walang allotment ng PS. Ito po iyong National Center for Geriatric Health, Philippine Cancer Society, Southern Tagalog Regional Hospital, Camiguin General Hospital, Medina Extension Hospital at Soccsksargen General Hospital. Mayroon po, Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor, na mga budget for MOOE, pero kapansin-pansin wala pong PS at wala pong CO. Ano po ba iyong dahilan bakit may ganito? Mayroon ba itong talagang mga pasilidad na in existence? Sinara na ba or whatever po iyong update kaugnay nito?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, lahat po ng pasilidad na nabanggit ay may existing na budget, at kung may kakulangan man po ito, Mme. Speaker, ay maaari po itong kunin sa MPBF, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mme. Speaker, ito po ay mga ospital. Hindi po ba mayroon tayong nakalagay? Ayon sa ating batas, lahat ng kawani ng gobyerno ay dapat swelduhan mula sa GAA? In other words, all employees must have funds for salaries which Congress must include in their PS. Ang legal basis po nito, Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor, ay iyong SSL 3 natin, iyong funding source nito.

The amounts necessary to implement the modified Compensation and Position Classification System and Base Pay Schedule

shall be as follows: For national government entities, the amounts shall be charged against the appropriations set aside for the purpose of the General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such amounts shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Ilang taon na rin itong na-raise, siguro, natatandaan ko, dalawa, tatlong taon na rin na ni-raise na itong mga ospital na ito, ang kinukuha po na funds source ay nanggagaling sa sinasabi nating Miscellaneous Personnel Benefits Fund. So, bakit po nangyayari ito? Mayroon naman po tayong legal basis para maisama po iyong ating mga empleyado sa mga naturang ospital doon sa regular General Appropriations Act.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, karamihan po sa mga ospital na nabanggit ay wala pang kaukulang batas na naipapasa, kaya kumukuha po mula sa Personnel Services ng ibang ospital para sa augmentation sa ospital na iyon. Kagaya po, Mme. Speaker, sa Geriatric, Mme. Speaker, sila po ay kumukuha ng pondo sa Jose Reyes General Hospital, Mme. Speaker. Ngunit sa panahon po na ipapasa na natin, at sana po ay maipasa na natin, iyong batas para sa Geriatric, ay magkakaroon na po sila ng sarili, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mme. Speaker, matagal na pong panahon ito, na pinapayagan na lang natin na lumipas iyong ganitong sistema sa Departamento ng DOH, na makikita naman natin ang kahalagahan ng sinasabi nating mga ospital na ito sa ating mga mamamayan. Syempre ang komento ko sa DOH, dapat hindi na ito pinatagal, dahil mayroon naman tayong basis dito, iyong legal basis natin sa GAA.

So, kung matanong ko lang po, Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor, ilan po ang affected na PS dito sa ospital na ito? Ilan po iyong mga empleyado natin na kinukuhanan lang po natin ng pondo mula sa ilang ospital ...

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, wala po ...

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). ... at bakit po...

REP. SY-ALVARADO. ... tayong eksaktong bilang na dala ngayon. Ngunit—maaari po bang payagan ng ating minamahal na Representante na ipadala na lamang bukas iyong hinihiling na bilang. Tatal naman po, Mme. Speaker, iyong pangangailangan naman para sa tamang pagpapasahod ay sinisigurado naman ng Kagawaran na sapat para sa lahat ng manggagawa po nito, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Maraming salamat, G. Sponsor. Pero iminumungkahi ko sa Committee on Appropriations na dapat ay pondohan ng hiwalay itong

PS na ito. Gusto natin itong maging konkreto. Magbigay ng kongkretong sulat na manggagaling sa Department of Health na may kaugnayan dito sa PS. Ano ba iyong kailangan, ano ba iyong pondo na kailangan, pati na sa Capital Outlay, para maidagdag natin, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, dito sa budget na ginagawa natin for 2020?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Maganda po iyong suhestyon ng ating minamahal na Interpellator, Mme. Speaker, at tinatanggap po ito ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, maaari ko bang mahingi iyong commitment ng ating Sponsor para asikasuhin po iyong hinihingi ng Kinatawang ito para po sa kongkreto mayroon na tayong magagawa dito?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Opo, Mme. Speaker, at mapuwera po doon, ang Kinatawang ito rin po ay isa sa mga principal Sponsors ng Geriatric Bill na inaasahan po natin na maipapasa ng Kongresong ito upang magkaroon na tayo talaga ng nakahiway na batas para sa ating minamahal na ospital, para sa ating mga nakatatanda, Mme. Speaker.

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

Pangalawang concern ko po, Mme. Speaker, noong 2019 po, ipinasa po natin sa Congress iyong line budget para sa annual medical check-up para sa mga public school teachers na nagkakahalaga ng P400 million under the DepEd budget, pero ito po ay na-veto ni Presidente Duterte subject to Universal Health Care IRR o Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Naitanong ko na rin po ito during the budget briefing ng DepEd at DOH, pero ang naisagot po sa atin ng Departamento ay mayroon daw pong lump sum na patungkol dito partikular sa PhilHealth yata iyong sumagot sa akin, pero hindi nila alam itong pondong ito na line-item budget na inilipat dito sa Department of Health.

Mme. Speaker, iyong hinihiling po natin na napagtagumpayan natin sa last budget ng 2019, ito po ay kauna-unahang pagtugon ng ating Kongreso sa Magna Carta for Public School Teachers benefits na may kaugnayan sa medical benefits ng teachers. Iba po iyong batas para sa PhilHealth, iba rin po iyong batas para sa Magna Carta for Public School Teachers—special po ito. Tuwang-tuwa na nga po ang mga teacher dahil mayroong ganito, at least P500 para taon-taon malilibre na po iyong mga guro natin, at least man lang sa x-ray, sa urinalysis, at anumang diagnostic processes na kinakailangan ng ating mga kaguruan.

So, ang tanong ko po, Mme. Speaker, nasaan na po iyong pondong ito? Nakita na ba o na-locate na ba ng PhilHealth o ng DOH?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, sa loob po ng Universal Health Care Law ay masasaklaw na po itong pangangailangang ito—sa loob ng expanded Primary Care Benefit package para sa ating mga guro, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Siguro po medyo parang hindi po tayo nagkakaunawaan kasi parang hindi ko po makuha iyong logic na—dahil ito po ay Magna Carta benefits ng teachers—dahil dinala po ito sa Universal Health Care. Ang sabi lang po sa veto ni Presidente, kailangan iyong IRR para maipatupad ito, pero separate ito, although na-course through sa DOH. Ang tanong ko, na-locate na ba ito? Ang ibig kong sabihin, nandidiyan iyan sa line-item budget ng 2019 na dapat pakinabangan na ng teachers ngayong taon na ito.

So, ang tanong ko po, nakita ba ito ng ating DOH man lang? Nakita ba ito sa budget natin for last year, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Sa PhilHealth pa rin po manggagaling, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, Mme. Speaker, ako po ay nalulungkot dahil kahit na iyong paglo-locate noong sinasabi nating budget na ito, nakakalungkot po sa—on behalf noong mga teacher, na isang tagumpay natin ito dito sa Kongreso na for the first time ay mapopondohan sana iyong Magna Carta at ito ay parang binalewala ng ating Department of Health partikular na ng PhilHealth dahil ang nakalagay lang naman dito ay iyong IRR.

Sige, mayroon na po bang IRR ang Universal Health Care kaugnay nitong budget na ito?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, hindi pa po natatapos ang IRR.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mme. Speaker, kailan po ito matatapos? Kasi kung bahagi lang po ng guro o bahagi lang po ng Magna Carta na na-course through sa DOH, dapat nagawa na po ito. Ano na po tayo ngayon? September. Mayroong tatlong buwan—October, November, December—para mapakinabangan ito ng ating mga kaguruan in preparation iyan sa next year. Pero may mako-commit ba ang ating Sponsor na matatapos ang IRR soon para magawa na po natin? Kasi iyong Universal Health Care, alam ko po na malaki po ang saklaw nito. Pero ang sinasabi lang kasi sa veto ay iyong partikular na na-veto ni Presidente na na-course through sa DOH. Ito po iyong hinahanap kong IRR mula doon sa UHC.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, bago po mag-November ay inaasahan ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan na matatapos iyong IRR. At iyong benepisyo po para sa mga guro ay makukuha po saklaw po, Mme.

Speaker, ng Primary Care Benefit package ng DOH para po sa ating mga guro.

Ang pagkaka-veto po ay nangyari, Mme. Speaker, pero hindi nakapagbaba ng pondo sa DOH kaya po humihingi po tayo parati ng tulong ngayon sa PhilHealth upang matulungan po tayo sa pagbibigay ng benepisyo sa ating mga guro. At sana po ay hindi tayo ma-veto sa pagkakataong ito, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mme. Speaker, hindi katanggap-tanggap ang sagot ng ahensiya at departamento dahil nililina ko na nga ito eh. Separate nga ito na benepisyo para sa mga teacher. At ini-expect ng Kinatawang ito, Mme. Speaker, na dapat mahiwalay na ito at ginawa ng DOH at ng PhilHealth ang kanilang katungkulan para magbigay ng partikular na atensiyon dito sa sinasabi nating line item budget na ito. Mayroon na itong budget eh. Ang kailangan na lang natin ay IRR.

Pangalawa, Mme. Speaker, iyong sinasabi ng PhilHealth na primary health care, isa ko pa pong issue ito sa PhilHealth natin, ang mga teachers po, talagang nagko-contribute iyan. Ang education sector ay nagko-contribute po iyan sa PhilHealth.

Noong nakaraang taon, wala pa po sa sampung porsiyento ang nabeneplisyuhan doon sa tinatawag nating primary health care o mayroong special kasi eh, iyong checkup na sinasabi natin at nag-expand na iyan, pero hanggang ngayon po hindi pa nama-maximize iyong benepisyo ng ating education sector kaugnay nitong tinatawag nating checkup o primary health care. So, hindi ito nama-maximize. So, iba ito doon sa sinasabi nating P400 million na budget.

So, dalawa po iyong gusto nating makuha sa DOH. Last year ko pa po itong issue, pero sa loob ng 365 days ay hindi po nagpakita ang PhilHealth sa office ng Kinatawang ito para ipakita iyong programa nila kung paano isasakatuparan itong checkup, iyong sinasabing primary health care.

Alam ninyo, Mme. Speaker, ang mga guro ay overworked, underpaid, walang sick leave, bawal magkasakit, at kung magkakasakit sila ay sa April and May dahil mayroong bayad ang mga teacher kapag April and May. Kapag during the 10-month period ng pagpasok, bawal magkasakit. No work, no pay. Kaya ito lang nga sana iyong aasahan natin na parang preventive care natin para sa mga teacher na magkakasakit sana. Pero hindi po ipinapatupad ng ating DOH.

I am afraid, Mme. Speaker, hindi ko kayang tanggapin ngayon iyong budget ng DOH dahil itong napakaliit lang na dapat na gawin ng DOH ay hindi nagawa.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, bagong palit po iyong ating PhilHealth OIC—bagong palit

po iyong ating PhilHealth President at malungkot po ang Kagawarang ito sapagkat hindi napagbigyan ng kaukulang pansin ng PhilHealth ang lahat na panaghoy ng mga guro na nagmumula sa ating minamahal na Representante. Kaya po, Mme. Speaker, kung mapagbibigyan po, ang PhilHealth will definitely make amends sa lahat ng pagkukulang nito sa representasyon ng ating minamahal na tagapagtanong at gagawin po ng PhilHealth ang makakaya upang mas magandang serbisyo ang maibigay sa ating mga guro, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Nagko-commit po ba ang ating Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, na tumulong as soon as possible na magawan po natin yuong hinihingi natin na benepisyo na medical para sa ating mga guro. Una, iyong IRR para dito sa P400 million na magna carta benefits for public school teachers. Pangalawa po ay iyong checkup, iyong primary health care. Sana po, as soon as possible, magharap po in a dialogue or discussion ang DOH at ang Kinatawang ito at ang Department of Education.

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

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, iyon lang po, Mme. Speaker. Maraming salamat sa ating Kinatawan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Thank you, Majority Leader.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker.

Next to interpellate, I move that we recognize Congresswoman Quimbo.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Hon. Stella Luz A. Quimbo of the Second District of Marikina City is now recognized.

REP. QUIMBO. Mme. Speaker, maaari po bang magtanong sa kagalang-galang na Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Maaari po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. QUIMBO. Mme. Speaker, isa po sa layunin ng Universal Health Care Act ay ang universal coverage. Pupuwede po bang mapaliwanag ng ating Sponsor ang ibig sabihin po ng “universal coverage”?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, ang Universal Health Coverage po, Mme. Speaker, ay nangangahulugan na ang bawat Pilipino ay may karapatan sa pagkakaroon ng social health insurance na sa ngayon po ay sa PhilHealth, Mme. Speaker.

REP. QUIMBO. So, ibig sabihin po, Mme. Speaker, ang target ng Universal Health Care Act ay dapat po 100 percent na po ng Pilipino ay sakop na po ng programa?

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

REP. QUIMBO. Mme. Speaker, ayon po sa official na report ng PhilHealth, ang Stats and Charts, 98 percent na po ng Pilipino ay kasapi ng PhilHealth, so, ang ibig sabihin na lang po, Mme. Speaker, 2 percent na lang po ang kailangan pong idagdag sa program. So, ang tanong ko po, Mme. Speaker, magkano po ang allocation para sa taong 2020 para sa premium contributions po?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, P153 billion po ang hinihingi ng PhilHealth, ngunit P67 billion lamang po ang naibigay, Mme. Speaker.

REP. QUIMBO. So, Mme. Speaker, P67 billion po ang naibigay. Magkano po ba ang premium rate ng bawat pamilya?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Two thousand four hundred po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. QUIMBO. Samakatuwid, Mme. Speaker, kung P67 billion, i-divide po natin by 2,400, ang ibig sabihin po niyan ay 28 million families po ang kaya pong maisponsoran po ng gobyerno sa taong 2020. Kung i-sponsor, Mme. Speaker, anong klase pong miyembro ang tina-target po natin? Ibig sabihin po, anong klaseng membership ang tina-target nitong P67 billion na nakalaan po para sa premium contributions?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Ang mga unemployed po o mga walang trabaho, Mme. Speaker, at indirect categories po ang pangkaraniwan na mabibigyan ng alokasyong ito sapagkat ang karamihan po sa atin ay nagbabayad na ng premium na kinakaltas sa ating mga sahod, Mme. Speaker.

REP. QUIMBO. Mme. Speaker, siguro gagamitin ko na lang po ang terminology na ginagamit dito sa Stats and Charts, palagay ko po ang P67 billion na iyan ay naka-target po para sa una, indigents at pangalawa po, para sa mga taga-informal sectors. Tama po ba, Mme. Speaker?

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

REP. QUIMBO. Ngayon po, ayon po sa report ninyo, ang dami po ng indigents na sakop na ng PhilHealth ay more or less 16 million; at ang informal

sector naman more or less ay 12 million. So, tamang-tama po, kapag isuma po natin iyan, 12 million at 16 million, tamang-tama po 28 million. Kaya siguro po iyan ang dahilan kung bakit P67 billion po ang nakalaan para sa taong 2020. Tama po ba, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. We will look into it, Mme. Speaker. Titingnan po namin, Mme. Speaker. Humigit-kumulang po, Mme. Speaker, ay tama po iyong sinasabi po ng ating tagapagtanong.

REP. QUIMBO. Tama po, Mme. Speaker. Maganda po sana na ganyan po na nakaparte ang P67 billion kaya lang po mayroon pong isang problema na nakikita ko po dito. Ang informal sector members po ba, sino po ang nagbabayad ng premiums nila? Sila po ba ay ang tinatawag na voluntary members?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, iyong mga indigent po ang covered sa sinasabi pong katanungan, Mme. Speaker.

REP. QUIMBO. Mme. Speaker, ang tanong ko lang po ay ang mga informal sector po ba na siya pong nakasakop doon sa voluntary membership ninyo, sila po ba ay kailangang magbayad out of their own pockets po ng P2,400? Tama po?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, iyong nasa informal sectors na mga professionals, sila po ang nagbabayad. Sila po iyong mga self-employed. Mga self-employed po, Mme. Speaker. Sila po ang nagbabayad kasi kaya naman nilang magbayad. Pero kung wala ka namang kakayanan na magbayad, ibig sabihin, as in indigent ka, mahirap ka, saklaw ka nitong indirect contributions from the government, Mme. Speaker.

REP. QUIMBO. Tama po iyon, kaya nga lamang po ang sinasabi ko po, itong 12 million families na sila po ay puwedeng magbayad on their own, they are at the same time being funded by the government.

So ang tingin ko po ay mayroon po ditong kaunti o baka malaking double counting. At kung i-maximize po natin ang double counting na iyan, 11.7 families multiplied by P2,400 amounts to P28 billion. So, kaya ko po nire-raise po iyon, arguably po, itong P67 billion ay may excess po. Ang tanong ko po, Mme. Speaker, in case po na mayroon po kayong excess funds, saan po ito napupunta?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Pagka po, Mme. Speaker, sobra iyong pondo ng PhilHealth, maaari pong babaan iyong premium upang iyong mga kapatid natin na nagbabayad ng premium ay kaunti na lamang iyong babayaran, o maaari rin pong itaas iyong benefits, iyong

mga benepisyo upang mas matagal na magamit iyong ating PhilHealth insurance, Mme. Speaker.

REP. QUIMBO. Pero po kung hindi po natin dinamihan ang benefits o hindi natin binabaan ang premiums, tama po ba, Mme. Speaker, na ang excess funds na iyan ay malalagay po sa reserves?

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

REP. QUIMBO. Siguro po iyan po ang dahilan, at paki-confirm na lang po, Mme. Speaker, kung bakit po ang laki po nang inilaki ng reserves mula 2017 to 2018. Samantalang ito ay isang Social Health Insurance Program, tila ito ay kumikita pa po dahil tumaas po ang reserves po natin from P110 billion in 2017 to P123 billion in 2018, Mme. Speaker.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Pag-aaralan pong maigi, Mme. Speaker, ng Kagawarang ito ang mensahe ng ating minamahal na Representative Quimbo, at totoo pong hindi naman kailangang kumikitang hanapbuhay itong PhilHealth, bagkus ito ay dapat nagbibigay ng magandang serbisyo sa ating mga mamamayan, Mme. Speaker.

REP. QUIMBO. Mme. Speaker, ano po ba ang purpose ng Reserve Fund?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, and Reserve Fund po ay isang pondo na maaaring magamit sa panahon ng mga unforeseen events katulad po ng mga sakuna, Mme. Speaker, epidemya, at ilan pang maaaring maging problema ng Kagawaran na hindi po nasasaklaw ng ordinaryong pagpapalano, Mme. Speaker.

REP. QUIMBO. Tama po iyon, Mme. Speaker, pero considering po na napakalaki po ng P123 billion and considering po na gina-guarantee naman po ng national government ang premium contributions ng ating mahihirap na mga kababayan, ang ating indigents, ang ating informal sectors, nandyan na rin po ang automatically covered na senior citizen lifetime members, at ang ating mga formal sector workers na automatically naman po nagbabayad po tayo ng isang payroll tax, ang aking palagay po, Mme. Speaker, ay napakalaki po ng P123 billion.

Siguro po, ang aking request na lang po, Mme. Speaker, baka puwede pong pag-aralan po ng ating actuary kung ano ba talaga ang sapat, ano ang minimum na reserves na kailangan. Nakasaad po sa batas ang maximum, which is two years of your benefit payments. Ngayon naman po, hindi naman po kayo nagtu-two years; one year lang po ang hawak po ninyo na benefit payments in reserve. Maganda pong pag-aralan ang aking mungkahi po.

On a final note po, Mme. Speaker, in previous years, in the previous administration, the DOH's budget for PhilHealth contributions had a special provision stating that the releases for premium contributions were not automatic but were subject to the attainment of certain key performance indicators. So ang tanong ko na lang po, kagalang-galang na Sponsor, sang-ayon po ba kayo na ito ay puwede po nating ikonsidera sa ating 2020 budget?

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

REP. QUIMBO. So, iyon na lang po.

Marami pong salamat, Mme. Speaker, kagalang-galang na Sponsor. Good afternoon po sa DOH family.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Maraming salamat po, Representative Quimbo, sa inyong napakagandang katanungan.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Thank you, Honorable Quimbo.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize Cong. Arlene D. Brosas of GABRIELA as our next interpellator.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Honorable Brosas is now recognized.

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

G. Isponsor, maaari po bang magtanong ng ilang mga questions kaugnay ng DOH budget, and iyong ahensya mismo, and policy questions?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Maaari po, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Maraming salamat, honorable Sponsor. Maraming salamat, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, napakarami pong naitalang kaso ng poor distribution of medicine sa ilalim ng Department of Health. Based on the COA Report as of December 31, 2018, a total of P18.449 billion worth of medicines which have been purchased have not yet been distributed to health facilities. COA also said that as of January 31, 2019, P294,767,000 worth of medicine which will be expiring in less than 12 months still lie in DOH warehouses. Furthermore, P19.165 million worth of drugs were found to be nearing its expiration. Mayroon ding P30.353 million worth of medicine ang inilagak sa hospitals na nag-expire na noong December 2018.

This is very alarming. Malaki ang nasasayang na pondo ng bayan kung ganito ang kinakalabasan. Laganap po ang iba't ibang sakit sa bansa, nandiyan ang dengue outbreak at marami ang nangangailangan ng gamot at tulong. Bakit at paano ito nangyari, Mme. Speaker? At ano po ang ginagawang aksyon ng Departamento hinggil dito?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, iyon pong mga nabanggit ng ating kapatid na Rep. Arlene Brosas ay nangyari po sa mga regional health centers, iyon pong mga nearly expired at na-expire na gamot na iyan. Ang Kagawaran ng Kalusugan po ngayon ay gumagawa at humihiling ng pagkakataon na mabigyan ng tulong na magkaroon ng mas magandang sistema at ma-automate iyong mga sistema nito upang hindi na po mauulit pa iyong pangyayaring iyan na masiraan tayo ng gamot. Ito ay nangyari dahil una, maagang dumarating ang gamot, kahit hindi pa naman kailangan, o kaya po sobra iyong nabibiling gamot. Hindi nabibigay iyong kaukulang feedback sa Department of Health.

Ito pong Departamentong ito ay gumagawa at nagsisikap gumawa ng mga hakbang upang maayos ang sistema, lalong-lalo na iyong sistemang nakapagpasira ng ilan sa ating mga gamot—naintindihan naman natin na bawat piso ay pinaghihirapan ng mamamayang Pilipino—nang hindi na muling maulit pa at hindi na ito masayang pa, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mme. Speaker, what are the mechanisms na ginagawa ngayon ng ahensya kaugnay diyan sa mga ineresulta nga ng nasasayang na gamot? Paano ito ngayon ginagawan ng paraan na maiparating sa ating mga kababayan?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, ang Kagawaran po ay gumawa ng nine-point system agenda para po maaksyunan iyong mga problemang ito. Ang unang-una po ay pagrereporma ng monthly inventory reports upang iyong pangangailangan ng end users, katulad po ng nabanggit ko kanina, ay maayos na maplano. Pangalawa po, iyong quarterly actual physical count ng ating mga stock para po sigurado tayong naaakma iyong bilang ng mga nasabing gamot. Ang pangatlo po ay pagre-reconcile ng quantities, procured per purchase request ng ating procurement. At ang pang-apat po ay regular reconciliation with Accounting Division para sigurado pong tama ang audit at ang bilang. Ang close coordination po, communication and monitoring sa supply chain, pagpapasidhi po ng distribution sa mga CHD, pagmo-monitor ng 3PLs po, ang pagkakaroon po ng “first expiry, first out” basis sa inventory method, at ang kahuli-hulihan po ay ang pag-i-implement po ng SCMO, ng monitoring mechanism para po sigurado tayo na lahat ng CHD ay magkakaroon ng deliveries ng mga gamot na on time, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mme. Speaker, mayroon na po bang kabuuang ulat kaugnay ng inventory nga na sinasabi ninyo ang DOH, at ito po ba ay mayroong kopya ngayon na pupuwedeng maibahagi sa amin para makita po natin, Mme. Speaker, kung saan makikita iyong bara ng pag-distribute ng gamot hanggang sa barangay level po? Kasi kung sa warehouse, sa ospital, ano bang nangyari in between? Iyon po sana iyong gusto nating makita, ang report kung saan maibabahagi sa atin ng DOH paano ito naganap, ano talaga iyong nangyari o saan bumara, Mme. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, mayroon po tayong inventory report per warehouse po, hindi po doon sa barangay level ang may hawak ngayon, pero maaari pong ibigay sa inyo iyong per barangay level. Ang maaari pong ibigay, Mme. Speaker, I stand corrected, Mme. Speaker, ang maaari pong maibigay sa inyo na report ay hanggang regional office, Mme. Speaker, sapagkat pagbagsak po sa regional office, sila po ang may mandato na mag-distribute sa mga probinsya, sa mga munisipyo o siyudad, hanggang sa barangay po, Mme. Speaker.

Maaari pong ibigay ang listahan ng inventory—bukas po ng umaga ay maibibigay po ang listahan ng inventories, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Salamat, Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor.

Kailangan po nating makita kung saan nanggagaling iyong problema. Kung hanggang sa regional po ay naipapamigay, pero mula sa region hanggang sa ibaba ay hindi naipapamigay, saan po doon bumabara?

Mme. Speaker, nakapagtataka lang na walang whole report ngayon iyong ahensya ng DOH kaugnay diyan kasi nakalagay nga dito, December pa lang, nakikita na na mayroong mga ganyang pangyayari. Maganda po sana na maging mabilis o maagap iyong magiging aksyon o iyong mga naging aksyon ng ahensya ng DOH kaugnay diyan, lalo pa at gamot ang pinag-uusapan, at nakalagay nga dito na may expiration iyan. Nanghihinayang po tayo sa mga gamot na hindi makarating doon sa ating mga mamamayan hanggang sa barangay level, lalo ngayon po na kailangang-kailangan ng mga mamamayan natin ang gamot at napakaraming sakit na kailangang tugunan.

Ang susunod ko pong tanong, ito po ay kaugnay sa unused appropriations for the whole of DOH, which include unreleased appropriations and unobligated allotment of P9.43 billion in unused funds. Tumaas ito ng 25 percent ngayong 2018 kumpara sa P7.55 billion noong 2017, samantalang 99.8 percent o P9.41 billion of unused funds ay mula sa Office of the Secretary. Tama po ba, Unused Funds, Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor?

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

REP. BROSAS. Mayroon pong 64.7 percent disbursement rate for 2018. Maaari ninyo po bang ipaliwanag kung anong nangyari sa funds na ito? Saan ito napunta?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, ito po ay nananatili sa Kagawaran sapagkat ito po ay obligated na, pero hindi pa lamang po nababayaran, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mme. Speaker, so, hindi ito bumalik sa Treasury?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Hindi po, Mme. Speaker, dahil obligated na po ito. Kailangan pong bayaran ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan ang kaniyang mga obligasyon. Iyon lamang po, hindi pa kumpleto iyong ah—hindi pa kumpleto iyong mga dokumento noong mga pagbabayaran, Mme. Speaker, kaya po hinihintay pa ng Kagawaran na magkumpleto ng dokumento iyong mga maniningil sa Kagawaran upang sila ay mabayaran, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Okay. Mme. Speaker, maaari po bang bigyan ang Kinatawang ito ng kopya ng mga obligated funds natin, kung saan-saan ito at anu-anong mga programa? Alam ninyo po, tinatanong natin ito dahil napakarami pong programa at pasilidad na nangangailangan ng pagpopondo para mapaunlad ang serbisyong pangkalusugan, kaya kailangan po very transparent din tayo at kung saan in-obligate o saan iyon nilagay na pondo, doon dapat iyon gastusin. Kung ang pondo po ay napakalaki pa at nasa loob ng inyong ahensya, maaari po bang mabigyan ng kopya ng kung saan-saan ito nakaparte, Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, maaari po bang ulitin ang katanungan?

REP. BROSAS. Pakibigay lang po. Mme. Speaker, humihingi lang po tayo ng kopya ng pag-a-allot—iyong allotment po ng kopya noong mga undisbursed pa na funds ...

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

REP. BROSAS. ... na sinasabi ninyo na hindi naman ibinalik sa Treasury kung hindi nasa loob pa rin ng ahensya ng DOH hanggang ngayon.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Bukas po ng umaga, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Ngayon po—dalawa na, *(Laughter)* dalawa na po, Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor, ang hinihiling.

Last July 2019, the Philippines declared a national dengue epidemic, national dengue alert, after 622 people died because of this. Tama po ba iyong aking numero?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Tama po, Mme. Speaker, as of July 2019.

REP. BROSAS. There were 146,000 dengue cases from January to July of this year, mas mataas po ito ng 98 percent kumpara sa nakaraang taon. Ang dami pong pamilya at batang naapektuhan, Mme. Speaker. Declaring national dengue epidemic is important to determine the areas that need response.

Ang Quick Response Fund (QRF) ng DOH ang gagamitin para sa epidemic situation na ito, Mme. Speaker. Paano po na-utilize ang fund na ito para matulungan ang mga naapektuhan? Alam ninyo po, malala na iyong sitwasyon ng dengue sa bansa natin. Makikita po ito sa mga datos na inilalabas even sa news po. Kailangan po nating makita iyong gravity noong sakit at paano ito tinutugunan sa kasalukuyan sa pamamagitan lamang ng QRF na mayroon tayo? Iyon lang po ba iyong kinukuhanan natin or mayroon pa po ba tayong mga iba pang solusyon kaugnay dito sa dengue outbreak na ito?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Ang PhilHealth din po, Mme. Speaker, ay nakatutulong din po sa dengue cases. Sa katunayan, mahigit P700,000,000 po ang naibayad ng PhilHealth sa iba't ibang ospital dahil po sa sakit na dengue. Sa QRF naman po, Quick Response Fund, nakagastos po ang Kagawaran ng Kalusugan nang mahigit P93 million para po dito sa sakit na dengue, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mme. Speaker, paulit po ng numero, 90?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mahigit P93 million po mula sa Quick Response Fund, mahigit P700 milyon po mula naman sa PhilHealth, at P49 million mula sa regular fund ng DOH, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mme. Speaker, mayroon po tayong P500 million na Quick Response Fund na standby fund natin. Kung saka-sakali, P93 million lang po ang nagamit natin dito.

Mme. Speaker, sa kasagsagan po ng dengue outbreak, may mga reports ng kakulangan ng medical facilities at equipment sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa tulad sa Western Visayas, Calabarzon, Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao and Soccsksargen. Mayroon pa ngang kaso sa Dr. Jose P. Rizal Memorial District Hospital sa Calamba, Laguna, na dahil sa kakulangan sa equipment, kalahati noong plastic bottle ang ginamit para gawing oxygen hood para sa isang sanggol.

Mme. Speaker, ang sinasabi po natin dito, bakit ganito iyong pagtugon ng DOH sa matindi nang kalagayan ng dengue outbreak. At mayroon naman tayong nakalaan na sinasabi nating QRF na P500 million. Iyong iba nga po nakita natin sa news iyong mga bed inilabas na ng hospital, doon na sila nakalugar sa sobrang dami po, doon na sa labas ng ospital isine-setup iyong mga hospital bed. So, kulang po sa equipment at saka sa mga pangangailangan sa mga facilities.

So, ang tanong po, mayroon namang ganitong pondo, bakit hindi ito natugunan? At bakit umabot tayo sa napakaraming namatay dahil sa dengue na ito?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mme. Speaker, intensyon po ng Kagawarang ito na gamitin iyong kabuuan ng Quick Response Fund ng DOH, ngunit malayo pa po ang itatakbo ng taon, Mme. Speaker. Mahirap ho na ubusin sa loob lamang ng tatlong buwan iyong pondo ng Quick Response Fund para sa buong taon para lamang sa dalawang buwan, Mme. Speaker.

Bagama't bawat buhay po ng ating mga kababayan ay hindi mo maaaring tumbasan ng pera o kahit ilang bilyon man ay hindi maaaring tumumbas sa iisang buhay ng ating kapwa Pilipino, ngunit hindi po maaaring maubusan kaagad ng pondo sa umaga o sa madaling araw ng ating taon ang DOH dahil kailangan pa nitong ayusin ang problema lalong-lalo na ng dengue hanggang December sa paggamit nito ng Quick Response Fund, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mme. Speaker, G. Sponsor, bilis-bilisan po ang pangangailangan, bilis-bilisan ang aksyon ng DOH kaugnay dito.

Hindi po biro iyong hinaharap natin dito sa mga dengue cases dahil palala ito nang palala. At sinasabi nga natin, napakalaki po ng bilang ng namatay ngayon, samantalang sinasabi po natin na ito ay kailangan nating gawin at sinasabi natin na mayroon namang pera para dito. Bakit nagkakaganito iyong nangyayari? May mga available funds, pero anong sinasabi natin, tinitipid natin or hahatiin natin iyong pondo sa mga ganito. Ito po ay panahon ng catastrophe, ito po ay panahon ng crisis, ito po ay panahon na magliligtas tayo ng buhay ng ating mga kababayan mula sa sakit.

Iyon po iyong tanong natin. Hindi ba dapat hindi natin nakikita na ang ating mga kababayan ay walang pasilidad, walang equipment, walang gamot dahil nasa warehouse pa dahil hindi makarating hanggang doon sa ano, Mme. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor? Iyong pondo po ay nandiyan, sinasabi ninyo, dapat pong magawan natin ito ng paraan, wala pong excuse para doon dahil buhay nga po—kayo na rin ang nagsabi, buhay ang nakasalalay dito.

So, Mme. Speaker, iyon lang po para dito sa kaso ng dengue at sana magawan ito immediately ng aksyon ng ahensya ng DOH.

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

REP. BROSAS. One last po, kaugnay po ito ng Administrative Order No. 2019-0026, ilan pong government-run birthing facilities ang mayroon nationwide?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mayroon po tayo, Mme. Speaker, na 2,741 birthing stations sa buong bansa, ang government-owned po o ang pag-aari ng gobyerno ay 1,182 at private po ay 1,559, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mme. Speaker, G. Sponsor, 2,000?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. 2,741 po para sa buong bansa, magkasama po ang government at private-owned, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mme. Speaker, I am asking these questions because we have received reports of a DOH Administrative Order No. 2019-0026, kung saan explicitly sinasabi dito na bawal mag-handle ang nurses at midwives ng G1-primigravida or a woman who is pregnant for the first time, at G5-grand multigravida or a woman who is pregnant for the fifth time or more in their respective birthing clinics nang hindi assisted ng doctor. Ano po ang status ng implementation nito at ano po ang sanctions sa mga health personnel na magpapaanak during emergency situations sa G1 at G5 pregnancy?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Patuloy po ang implementasyon ng batas na ito, Mme. Speaker, at kung mahuli po na hindi sumusunod ay matatanggalan po ng lisensya ang birthing station o ang mga may-ari po nito, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor, ang tanong po natin ay specific doon sa mga midwives and nurses na magsasagawa nito. Ano pong mangyayari sa kanila? Matatanggalan sila ng lisensya?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Matatanggalan po sila ng lisensya, Mme. Speaker. Iyong facility po ang matatanggalan ng lisensya, mananatili iyong lisensya ng mga health workers kasi iyong pasilidad po ang dapat nangangasiwa at nagpo-police ng mga pasyente po nito, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor, we recognize the good intention of this Administrative Order para mapababa iyong risk o iyong disgrasya na may kaugnayan sa panganganak pero, Mme. Speaker, hindi lapat sa reyalidad ang Administrative Order na ito dahil galang na po sa inyo, out of the 42,044 barangays,

mayroon lang tayong 2,741 birthing facilities sa buong bansa, magkasama na po ang private at public.

Wala sa kalahati nga ang mayroong barangay health stations and not all of those barangay health stations have health personnel or doctors. Hindi rin ganoon karami ang government-owned. Iyon nga, 2,741 lang ang mayroon tayo na may regular doctor. Hindi rin po lingid sa inyong kaalaman na marami pang munisipalidad na iisa lamang ang doktor. Hindi ba dapat bago po inilabas iyong Administrative Order na ito ay tiniyak muna natin na sapat ang mga pasilidad para sa panganganak? Iyong birthing structures, iyong doctors and other health personnel at iba pang mga equipment.

Sa totoo lang po, mas malala ito kaysa sa “No Home Birthing Policy” dahil hindi lang nito ipinagbabawal ang panganganak sa bahay kung hindi ipinagbabawal din ang panganganak kahit sa isang health facility na nurse o midwife lamang ang nag-a-assist. So, parang ang mangyayari po, alam ninyo naman po iyong rural situation sa atin kung saan ang kadalasan ay traditional birth attendants ang naroon. Kaya nga po ang DOH nagkaroon dati ng programa noong 1980s na iyong mga traditional birth attendants natin o iyong mga hilot natin ay nag-training mismo sa DOH kaya kung ganito po, baka ang kalalabasan po nito ay mapenalize pa lalo. Iyon po iyong pinangangambahan namin, ma-penalize pa lalo iyong mga midwives and nurses lalo na sa mga far-flung areas dito sa ating bansa dahil ang gagawin nila ay magpaanak ng G1 or G5 na ipinagbabawal ngayon sa Administrative Order na sinasabi ninyo.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Tama po iyon, Mme. Speaker. Kaya po ayon po riyan sa usapin po o isyu pong iyan, humihingi po ang DOH ng mga karagdagang birthing stations sa ating budget upang mapunuan po natin iyong napakalaki pang kakulangan—almost 40,000 na birthing stations na kakulangan para sa buong bansang Pilipinas, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor, hinihiling po ng Kinatawang ito na i-review ng DOH ang kanilang Administrative Order 2019-0026 for the following reasons nga po na baka mas lalo nga na mag-penalize pa tayo ng mga midwives and nurses natin tapos walang mga health centers. Sa totoo lang po, nag-a-accredit po tayo ng mga lying-in clinics hindi ba? Tama po ba, Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor?

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

REP. BROSAS. At hindi po iyon sapat lalo na sa mga malalayong lugar. In fact, sa totoo lang po, mula noon hangad namin sa GABRIELA na madagdagan ang budget ng DOH para sa pagtatayo ng mga health

centers at iba pang health structures para matugunan natin iyong mga ganitong problema, basically, iyong primary healthcare or maternal health.

Iyon po ang gusto naming i-prioritize, pero kapag mayroon po tayong AO na ganito, na wala tayong sapat na pasilidad, wala tayong sapat na health stations, wala tayong sapat na health structures at wala tayong sapat na doktor, Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor, magba-backfire po sa atin ang mga ganitong administrative order. Kasi, baka mamaya magdelikado pa lalo iyong mga manganganak sa mga far-flung areas kapag walang mag-aasikaso sa kanila sa takot na sila ay mabigyan ng sanction dahil sa Administrative Order No. 2019-0026. So, hinihiling po natin na i-review ito nang mabuti ng ahensya ng DOH.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Opo, Mme. Speaker, re-review-hin po ito. At tama po ang sinabi ni Representative Arlene Brosas, mula sa GABRIELA Party-List, na malaki pa ang kakulangan at mas lalo pang nagdedelikado, lalung-lalo na ang ating mga kababayan na delikado sa panganganak. Mahigit 33 percent po ng mga namatay sa panganganak ay sa kadahilanang walang doktor na kaharap. Ngunit, nakikita po ng Departamentong ito na kailangan pang pag-igihin ang training ng ating mga health professionals upang mapunuan po natin iyong pagkukulang natin sa doktor, pagkukulang natin sa mga birthing at health facilities, at kakulangan po natin sa health equipment.

Nagpapasalamat po ang Kagawarang ito sa GABRIELA Party-List na tumutulong sa atin upang maibalik iyong ating mga hinihinging pondo, Mme. Speaker.

REP. BROSAS. Mme. Speaker, G. Isponsor, overall po, ayaw namin na tinatangalan ng budget ang basic services natin katulad ng mga public hospitals kasi alam po natin iyong halaga nito na dito pumupunta ang mga mahihirap nating mamamayan.

Kaya, isa po ito, iyong sinasabi nga natin, ang priority talaga natin, sana ay makagawa o magkaroon ng budget para sa pagtatayo ng health centers, health structures, para sa primary healthcare at maternal health.

I hope this will be prioritized by the government kasi ito po iyong kailangan talaga natin. Hindi po dapat binabawasan ang budget ng DOH kundi dinadagdagan natin lalo na para sa mga pampublikong ospital.

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

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Thank you, Hon. Arlene D. Brosas.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mme. Speaker, with the indulgence of the Department of Health, I move that we suspend the consideration of the proposed budget of the Department of Health including its attached agencies.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

REP. TAN (A.P.). Mme. Speaker, I move that we proceed with the consideration of the proposed budget of the Department of Science and Technology.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; we now consider the budget of the Department of Science and Technology including its attached agencies.

REP. TAN (A.P.). Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

To sponsor the proposed budget of the Department of Science and Technology, I move that we recognize Representative Violago, the Vice Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations to answer questions, if there are any.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Hon. Micaela S. Violago is recognized to sponsor the budget of the Department of Science and Technology including its attached agencies.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TAN (A.P.). Before we begin, Mme. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of our guests in the gallery: the Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology, Secretary Fortunato T. Dela Peña, Undersecretary Rowena Cristina L. Guevarra, Undersecretary Brenda L. Nazareth-Manzano, Assistant Secretary Teodoro M. Gatchalian, Assistant Secretary Maridon Sahagun, and the heads of the attached agencies.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). The family of the Department of Science and Technology is welcome to the House of Representatives. (*Applause*)

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. COLLANTES. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Micaela S. Violago to interpellate the Sponsor—sorry, I move that we recognize Rep.

Stella Luz A. Quimbo to interpellate the Sponsor on the proposed budget of the DOST.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). Hon. Stella Quimbo is now recognized.

REP. QUIMBO. Mme. Speaker, there being no Member from the Minority who wishes to ask questions on the budget of the Department of Science and Technology, I move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate on their proposed budget.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. COLLANTES. Mme. Speaker, we join the Minority in the motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Department of Science and Technology including its attached agencies.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Escudero). 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 Department of Science and Technology including its attached agencies is hereby terminated.

REP. VIOLAGO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. COLLANTES. Mme. Speaker, I move to suspend the session to allow our guests and their technical staff to vacate the floor, and allow the guests and the technical staff of the next department to settle down.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

It was 5:01 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:06 p.m., the session was resumed with Deputy Speaker Prospero A. Pichay Jr. presiding.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider the proposed budget of the State Universities and Colleges.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker...

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Paul Ruiz Daza to sponsor the proposed budget of the State Universities and Colleges.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Hon. Paul Daza is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, may I move to suspend the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). One-minute suspension.

It was 5:06 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:07 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Hon. Paul Ruiz Daza to sponsor the proposed budget of the SUCs.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). The Hon. Paul Daza is hereby recognized. Please proceed.

REP. DAZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is my honor and pleasure to sponsor and defend the budget of the State Universities and Colleges this afternoon.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Sr. Dep. Minority Leader, the Hon. Janette L. Garin.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). The Hon. Janette Garin is hereby recognized. Please proceed.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There being no Member from the Minority who wishes to interpellate or ask questions in relation to the proposed budget of the State Universities and Colleges, we move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate on all the proposed budgets except those of the Philippine State College of Aeronautics, the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, and the University of the Philippines.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Majority, we join the Minority in its motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the rest of the State Universities and Colleges except for the three abovementioned.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DAZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). One-minute suspension.

It was 5:09 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:11 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Continuation

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we resume the consideration of the proposed budget of the Department of Health including its attached agencies.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. To continue with defending the proposed budget of the DOH, I move that we recognize the Hon. “Kuya” Jose Antonio R. Sy-Alvarado, Mr. Speaker.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Hon. Jonathan Alvarado, please proceed.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Ready to continue, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr. of the Third District of Camarines Sur for his interpellation.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Honorable Bordado, you are recognized. Please proceed with your interpellation.

REP. BORDADO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Sponsor, I have a report here ...

REP. PALMA. Honorable Bordado, please. Honorable Bordado, please.

Mr. Speaker, may I request the ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Order, please. Order. Order please.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, may I request all the Members, all persons who are in the plenary to please observe silence so that we can move on with the deliberations on our proposed budget. Kindly, please, refrain from making unnecessary noise.

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

Honorable Bordado, you have the floor. Please proceed.

REP. BORDADO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, I have a report here which says that the second highest allocation goes to the Public Health Program at P16.9 billion or 21.3 percent of the total proposed appropriations for programs.

This Department program, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, includes the National Immunization Program, a priority program mentioned in the President’s budget, which was mentioned in the President’s SONA. The program aims to immunize infants and children against the most vaccine preventable diseases which will be allocated with a total of P7.5 billion. Note, however, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, that for the past three years, the percentage of fully vaccinated children has been very low. The 2018 Annual PhilHealth Services Information System Report shows that 75 percent of the targeted children were fully vaccinated in 2014, but this went down, Mr. Speaker, to almost 70 percent in 2015, 69 percent in 2016, it went further down to 67 percent in 2017, and to 66 percent in 2018.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, is the data correct?

REP. SY. ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, what is the Department doing to improve the numbers and to spread awareness of the importance of vaccination to the public?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, the Department is doing supplemental immunization in public schools.

REP. BORDADO. Okay.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. So, the parents would no longer have difficulty going to the health centers, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. Is this concern already included in the P7.5 billion allocation for vaccination for 2020?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, another concern plaguing in the country is the dengue epidemic. I believe the previous interpellators had already posed these questions, so I would not propound these questions to you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, thank you, Your Honor.

REP. BORDADO. For as long as the DOH will

make the assurance that all steps are being taken to address the concerns regarding the dengue epidemic.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, in terms of programs, according to the report, the health facilities operation program posted a 91 percent disbursement rate according to the report. Is this correct?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, can you give us the date of that report, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BORDADO. I believe, it is 2017.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. It is correct, Your Honor. Mr. Speaker. It is correct, 91 percent.

REP. BORDADO. Okay. According to the report, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, the high disbursement rate was for the operation of DOH hospitals in Metro Manila, and DOH regional hospitals and other health facilities. Is that correct?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, most of the fund for the HFEP were used for the structures of hospitals, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BORDADO. Okay, and the public health program hosted a low 22.5 percent disbursement rate, which included the National Immunization Program, which also hosted a very low disbursement rate of only 15.9 percent. Is this correct, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. Now, what specific steps can the DOH implement in order to address these rising concerns, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. At the moment, Mr. Speaker, the DOH is upgrading its systems so that deliveries will be faster and disbursement rates will also be faster.

REP. BORDADO. Okay. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. According to the COA, eight of the major programs had low disbursement rates in 2018 ranging from 0 percent to 40.9 percent. These reflect the inability of the management to execute the DOH programs. Am I correct, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the COA is correct, but the DOH cannot pay its obligations if the deliveries have not been met yet. The suppliers

should deliver first before the DOH will disburse its commitment to the suppliers, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BORDADO. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, we must remember that this particular aspect covers, among other things, the Health Facilities Enhancement Program, the Expanded Program on Immunization, the National Tuberculosis Control Program, and the National HIV-AIDS and STI Prevention and Control Programs.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BORDADO. What is the DOH doing about it?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. At the moment, Mr. Speaker, as I said, the DOH is upgrading its systems so it can manage its finances better, but the deficiency in the past was all because of the late deliveries of the suppliers, Mr. Speaker. Definitely, the DOH is doing something about it.

REP. BORDADO. I believe, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, that the DOH should do something about it because of the implications and the impact on public health. Since the Department's programs deal with concerns that need to be addressed in a timely manner, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, how does the DOH plan on improving the urgent and effective execution of its programs?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. In the Planning Section, Mr. Speaker, the DOH family is now doing its best to computerize its systems. From planning to disbursements, until monitoring and feedbacks, it will automatically go to the DOH. The low utilization rate will be eradicated by next year, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. BORDADO. Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor. I fully support the DOH. Thank you very much. I do hope you can really implement all these things to address the concerns which I raised a few minutes ago. Thank you very much.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Thank you very much, Congressman from the Third District of Camarines Sur, Cong. Gabriel Bordado Jr.

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

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Mr. Speaker, before we proceed with the next interpellator, may I request that

we acknowledge the presence of some of our guests in the gallery. They are the guests of Cong. Alfredo A. Garbin Jr. from AKO BICOL Party-List. We have: Mayors Noel Rosal of Legazpi City, Amy Villanueva of Tiwi, Domingo Escoto of Oas, Gemma Onghoco of Guinobatan and Mr. Basil Gutierrez, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Will the guests of Congressman Garbin please rise and be acknowledged.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Cong. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate from BAYAN MUNA Party-List as the next interpellator.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Honorable Zarate is recognized. Please proceed.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Magandang hapon po sa ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor. Puwede ho bang maglinaw ng ilang mga isyu patungkol sa budget ng PhilHealth.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Maaari po, Mr. Speaker, at kagalakan kong mapaglinawan, mabigyan ng linaw ang ilan sa mga magiging katanungan ng ating Kinatawan mula sa BAYAN MUNA, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat po, kagalang-galang na Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Deretso na po ang aking tanong sa usapin ng pagkakaltas ng budget. Isa sa nakaltasan ng budget para sa darating na taon ay ang budget sa rehabilitation centers and facilities. Sa taong kasalukuyan ay mayroon itong P1.235 billion na budget, pero sa darating na taon ay mababawasan ito sa P1.1 billion na lamang.

Itong kampanya laban sa droga ang sentro ng kasalukuyang pamahalaan. Sa katunayan, sa nakaraang tatlong taon, kung pagbabatayan natin ang opisyal na statistika mula sa Philippine National Police, halos 6,000 na mamamayan natin ang napaslang na sa mga operasyon ng mga kapulisan, pero sinasabi natin na itong kampanya sa droga, hindi ito matatapos lamang sa pamamaslang. Kaya kailangang holistic ang pagtingin natin dito, kailangan mayroon rehabilitasyon. Pero kung ito po ay nare-reflect sa ating budget, parang tinitingnan natin dito na ang talagang solusyon ng kasalukuyang administrasyon ay pagpatay, pagpatay at pagpatay pa rin. Dahil kahit doon mismo sa usapin ng pondo para sa rehabilitation and treatment of our drug victims, because they are victims, binabawasan po ang pondo. Puwede po bang marinig natin kung ano ang kadahilanan dito, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, ang Kagawaran ng Kalusugan po ay marami ang requests sa DBM para sa health facilities natin, para sa treatment and rehabilitation centers, ngunit hindi po ito napagbigyan, Mr. Speaker. Magiging masaya po ang Kagawaran ito kung mapagbibigyan iyong ating mga request upang mapa-rehab ang ating mga kababayan na namamali ng landas, lalung-lalo na sa paggamit ng ipinagbabawal na gamot.

Ang bawat buhay—naiintindihan po ng Kagawaran ito at kasama sa mandato nito na alagaan at proteksyunan ang kalusugan ng bawat isa, kasama na rin na iwasan ang kawalan ng buhay ng bawat Pilipino sa buong mundo. Kaya, kaisa po ang Representasyong ito sa mungkahi ng ating kapatid mula sa BAYAN MUNA. Nasaan nga ba ang mga request na budget para sa ating rehabilitation facilities, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po, G. Isponsor, at naging kaisa namin kayo sa pagtingin na dapat talagang bigyang pansin at pagtuunan ang usapin ng rehabilitasyon. Dahil habang kinakaltasan natin ang budget na ito, tumaas naman ang pondo ng kapulisan, maging ang pondo ng militar. Sabi ko nga, noong tayo ay nagtalakayan at nagdebate sa General Principles ng Budget na ito, parang budget sa giyera at hindi budget na para sa progreso ng ating bayan ang nangyari.

Ang susunod na gusto kong puntuhan, although ito po ay nabanggit na rin ng ibang kasamahan natin kanina, talagang sa hinaba-haba at paulit-ulit na debate ng budget sa DOH o sa budget ng ating pangkalusugan sa nakaraang mga panahon at hanggang ngayon, ang isang katangian nito, sa tingin ko, ay budget na papunta sa pribatisasyon. Kung titingnan po ninyo ngayon ang budget ng DOH ay nasa P88 billion, pero ang budget ng PhilHealth ay nasa P67 billion or 43 percent ng kabuang budget ng DOH. Alam naman po natin na ang katangian ng budget mula pa noong una akong pumasok dito during the Sixteenth Congress, taun-taon ay kinakaltasan natin ang budget ng mga pampublikong ospital, pero palaki nang palaki ang ating subsidy sa PhilHealth, at na-confirm ang aking matagal nang suspisyon na nabanggit kanina, mayroong Reserve Fund ang PhilHealth na sa kasalukuyan ay P123 billion.

Taun-taon, kinakaltasan natin ang budget ng mga pampublikong ospital, iyong pondo sa kanilang pambili ng gamot, pasilidad at iba pa, dahil dinadala natin ang budget sa PhilHealth, pero ano ang nangyayari ngayon? Even the utilization rate of PhilHealth ay napakababa, at kahit doon sa sinabi natin kanina na P67 billion for 2020, inamin na rin po ng Kagawaran, hindi naman nauubos ito at napupunta lang sa Reserve Fund.

Unang katanungan patungkol diyan, ano po ba ang pinaggagamitan nitong Reserve Fund? Ito po ba ay ini-invest ng PhilHealth sa ibang mga negosyo o ito ay

pinapatulog ng PhilHealth para sa susunod na taon ay madagdagan na naman ang kanyang Reserve Fund na kinukuha rin sa pondo ng Department of Health, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, ang Reserve Fund po ng PhilHealth ay ginagamit sa mga bagay na hindi natin inaasahan, sa mga epidemya, sa mga sakuna, pagka tumanda na po ang populasyon ng Pilipinas at marami nang nag-retire, ito pong Reserve Fund ay gagamitin para sa patuloy na pagpapaospital ng retirees natin na wala nang babayaran, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat po, G. Isponsor.

So itong P123 billion, para lang mailinaw natin on record, ang P123 billion ay nasa bangko lang, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Opo, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Paano po, time deposit, savings?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Ang ilan po dito, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, ay nasa investment and securities. Ang ilan naman ay nasa corporate bonds. Ang ilan ay nasa treasury bills. Ang ilan po ay nasa bangko, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Puwede po bang mailatag dito sa Kapulungang ito, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, magkano sa P127 billion ang ating inilagay sa investment, halimbawa, sa T-Bills o ano ang iba pang pinagpopondohan natin sa P127 billion, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Sa special savings deposits po ay mayroon tayong mahigit P6 billion sa LBP; sa PVB, P12 million mahigit; sa DBP ay mahigit P3 billion; sa Treasury Bills po ay mayroon tayong kulang sa P5 billion; Treasury Bonds, mahigit P38 billion; Retail Treasury Bonds, kulang sa P43 billion; at sa Retail Treasury Bonds for lifetime members, P26.5 billion, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Puwede po bang mabigyan ang Kinatawang ito ng detalyadong report paano natin na-invest o ginamit itong P127 billion.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Ibibigay po ngayon, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ZARATE. Salamat, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

By the way, kanina po, nabanggit ng ating kagalang-

galang na Sponsor na ang kanilang ni-request na pondo ay P153 billion for PhilHealth sa 2020. Tama po ba iyong pagkarinig ko na P153 billion, subalit ang na-approve lamang ng DBM ay humigit kumulang sa P67 billion?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Tama po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ZARATE. Puwede po bang maipaliwanag ng ating Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, bakit po P153 billion? Kung ating titingnan ay nasa 28 million families ang iko-cover sa darating na taon. Nabanggit kanina na ang coverage ng premium na ito ay P2,400 per family. Kung tama ang aking pagkakakuha, the P67 billion covers in general the 28 million families. Puwede po bang maipaliwanag ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, why P153 billion ang ni-request?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Maaari po bang pakiulit iyong huling katanungan, Mr. Speaker?

REP. ZARATE. Nabanggit po ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor na ang ni-request ng DOH na subsidy for PhilHealth for 2020 is P153 billion, although ang na-approve lamang ng DBM ay P67 billion, humigit kumulang, kaya ang aking katanungan, bakit po P153 billion ang ating ni-request?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, dahil plano po ng DOH na mapalawak pa o mapalawig ang benepisyo para sa primary care, Mr. Speaker, kaya P153 billion po ang ni-request, ngunit P67 billion lamang ang naibigay, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sa projection ninyo, itong P153 billion, ilang milyong pamilya ang masasakop nito bilang miyembro ng PhilHealth, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, sa P153 billion po, ang orihinal na plano po ay mai-cover ang mahigit 30,000,000 miyembro na pamilya, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Ito po ay sa kadahilanang lalakihan po sana iyong benepisyo kaya po ganito po ang bilang, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Para pong—at the back of my mind, mabuti na lamang po at hindi ibinigay iyong P153 billion na iyon dahil kung magkaganoon, napakalaki na naman po ang papasok sa inyong Reserve Fund, ‘no? Sinabi kanina sa P67 billion, sasakupin na nito ang 28 million families—6 million indigents and 12 million from the informal sectors. In fact, doon sa informal sectors na iyan, mayroon pang porsiyento diyan na sila mismo

ang nagbabayad ng premium. Kaya kung naibigay iyong P153 billion na iyon, tiyak mayroon na namang malaking papasok sa Reserve Fund dahil hindi ito mauubos, 'no?

By the way, ano po ang utilization rate ng PhilHealth sa taong 2018?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, nitong taon po na ito ay mahigit kumulang 11 milyong Pilipino po ang nakinabang sa PhilHealth. Kaya kung idi-divide po natin iyan sa 110 million na Pilipino ay, more or less, mayroon po tayong 10 to 11 percent na utilization rate, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ZARATE. So, 10 to 11 percent utilization rate?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, opo, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ZARATE. Sobrang napakababa po niyan kaya iyon po ang ating ipinupunto diyan, 'no. Binibigyan kayo ng pondo, napakalaking pondo, subsidy mula sa pondo ng bayan, ibinibigay sa PhilHealth, pero halimbawa ngayong taon, kapag sinasabi ninyong 10 to 11 percent, sabihin na nating 20 percent, ibig sabihin, 80 percent niyan ay pondong hindi napapakinabangan ng ating mamamayan at iyan ay papasok na muli sa inyong Reserve Fund, 'no. So, iyan po ang gusto nating ipunto rito, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Taun-taon lumalaki nang lumalaki ang ating—at hindi pa kasama rito ang usapin na nitong mga nakaraan, ang PhilHealth ay parang—sa pana-panahon, *déjà vu*, 'no—nasasangkot siya sa napakaraming mga usaping korapsyon, 'no. At pondo ng bayan ang nandiyan sa PhilHealth, pero pinapakinabangan ito ng mga tiwaling opisyal ng PhilHealth at mga tiwaling nasa pribadong sektor. Alam ito ng ating Sponsor at alam ito ng ating Speaker. Marami pong kung anu-anong mga fraudulent claims ang nasa PhilHealth. So, ang kaugnay ko na tanong diyan, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, dito sa mga katiwalian ito, ano ang kongkretong plano ng DOH at ng PhilHealth? Hanggang ngayon ...

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, lahat po ng taong nasangkot sa mga allegations na katiwalian ay nakahabla na po ngayon at nililitis na po ng husgado ang kanilang mga kaso, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ZARATE. Sige po, hihingi po tayo ng isang report, 'no. Napakarami na pong mga iskandalo sa PhilHealth, pero maliban po doon sa pagsasampa ng kaso, ano po ang plano ng Kagawaran para po dito sa paulit-ulit na problemang ito, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Unang-una po, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, isang napakagandang hakbang

po nito ay ang pagpapalit ng liderato sa PhilHealth, at mula po sa pagpapalit ng liderato ng PhilHealth ay ang pag-uumpisa po ng cleansing sa ranggo ng PhilHealth. Wala naman po tayong masasabing 100 percent na masisigurado na mauubos natin iyong mga tiwaling opisyal diyan, pero iyong mga paunang hakbang po ay ginagawa na ng gobyerno ngayon. Ito po ay hindi tatantanan at hindi titigilan ng liderato ng PhilHealth, lalung-lalo na po ng DOH. Kasama ninyo rin po ang Representasyong ito at ang malaking Kapulungang ito sa pagbabantay sa mga katiwalian dito sa Korporation ng PhilHealth, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. ZARATE. Sige po, maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor.

Alam ko po sa susunod na taon ay ganito rin muli ang magiging takbo ng ating debate dahil sa narinig ko sa inyo, talagang kiling naman, ang bias ng pamahalaan at ng kasalukuyang administrasyon ay doon pa rin sa serbisyong pangkalusugan na dinadaan sa isang konsepto nang paseguro, habang ang ating public health, for example, ang ating mga pampublikong ospital, dahil kami po ay naniniwala na dapat talaga mas popondahan natin ang ating mga pampublikong ospital, mas paramihin natin ang ating mga health professionals sa ating mga pampublikong ospital, lagyan natin ito ng mga kinakailangang pasilidad, at sa halip na doon ilalaan ang napakalaking pondo, na ang nakikinabang ay ang pribadong sektor sa kalakhan.

So, iyan na lang po ang aking mga paglilinaw. Umaasa ang Kinatawang ito na pagsisikapan ng Kagawaran na, halimbawa, ang mga pondong nakaltas para sa ating mga pampublikong ospital and public health facilities at doon ho sa usapin ng ating mga health professionals, sa halip na puro job orders, puro casual, maraming casual job orders, ay mag-hire ho tayo ng mga permanenteng health professionals na siyang magpapatakbo sa ating mga pasilidad.

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Maraming salamat, Mr. Sponsor.

Magandang hapon ho sa ating lahat.

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

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat.

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

REP. SUAREZ (D.). Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize our next interpellator, Cong. Argel Joseph T. Cabatbat of MAGSASAKA Party-List.

I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay).
Congressman Cabatbat, you are recognized.
Please proceed with your interpellation.

REP. CABATBAT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

My first question concerns the Unobligated Allotment for the Department, particularly the Office of the Secretary. There is an Unobligated Allotment in the amount of P5.4 billion in 2017. May we know what happened to this Unobligated Allotment, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, it already reverted to the General Fund, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CABATBAT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. To what expense class does this Unobligated Allotment of P5.4 billion relate? Are there any Capital Outlays, MOOE, included in the said Unobligated Allotment?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, it is included in the Personnel Services, MOOEs and Capital Outlays, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CABATBAT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. The reason I took this up is due to the fact that as far as I can remember, the appropriations for 2017 is valid for two years, except for the PS. So, anyway, moving forward to my next question, Mr. Speaker, for year 2018, did the Department generate savings, Mr. Speaker, as defined under the GAA of 2018?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Wala po, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CABATBAT. So, there are no savings for 2018, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, but for the projects for 2018, Mr. Speaker, there must have been a difference between the agency budget for a particular project or for all of the projects and the contract award price for 2018. How did the Department treat this difference? Did the Department consider them as savings?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, it reverted to the General Fund also.

REP. CABATBAT. I would like to clarify my question, Mr. Speaker. If these balances were considered savings, then they would have been used for augmentation for the deficiencies in the projects of the Department, but if the Department did not consider these balances as savings, naturally, the funds will revert to the National Treasury. So, my question, Mr. Speaker, how did the

Department treat the difference between the contract price, for the budget allotted to the contract, and the contract award price for 2018, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, it reverted to the General Fund because the Department did not treat it as savings as they did not intend to use it for the Department's purposes because they already have Programmed Funds for the different programs of the Department. So without the program of the Department written in the GAA, they did not use the supposedly savings fund, and just gave them back to the General Fund, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CABATBAT. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I noticed in the NEP, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, that the Department did not report any item on the continuing appropriations. Unlike DAR, unlike the Congress, and the Senate, the DOH did not report any continuing appropriations for 2018. May we know why, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Mr. Speaker, because of the validity of the funds in the GAA of 2017, where it was stipulated that the funds to be used is only for one year. So, they did not request for the unused funds to be used for the previous year, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CABATBAT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One last question, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. Did the Department ask for augmentation for any deficiencies in its priority programs for the last five years and if so, may we ask for a report, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, in 2018, the Department requested for P500 million in MAIF, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CABATBAT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not press further on the matter. I will settle for the submission of a report to my office concerning that issue, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Definitely, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CABATBAT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Thank you, Hon. Argel Cabatbat.

REP. SY-ALVARADO. Thank you, Cong. Argel Cabatbat from MAGSASAKA Party-List.

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

REP. BARONDA. With leave of the House, we recognize again the honorable Congresswoman from the province of Iloilo, Rep. Janette L. Garin.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Honorable Garin (J.), you are recognized. Please proceed.

REP. GARIN (J.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There being no Member from the Minority who would wish to interpellate further on the proposed budget of the Department of Health and its attached agencies, we move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate insofar as their budgets are concerned. *(Applause)*

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

REP. BARONDA. Mr. Speaker, we join the Minority in their motion and move to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Department of Health, Mr. Speaker.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). There is a joint motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Department of Health. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. BARONDA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the session to allow our guests and their technical staff to vacate the floor to pave the way to our guests from the next agency and their staff.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). We will have a one-minute suspension of the session.

REP. BARONDA. Thank you.

It was 5:59 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:17 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

PHILIPPINE COMPETITION COMMISSION

REP. TAN (A.P.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the consideration of the proposed budget of the Philippine Competition Commission.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TAN (A.P.). Mr. Speaker, to sponsor the budget of the Philippine Competition Commission, I move that we recognize Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda, Vice Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, to answer questions, if any.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). The honorable Congressman Salceda is recognized. Please proceed with your sponsorship.

REP. SALCEDA. Ready to answer questions, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. TAN (A.P.). Before we begin, Mr. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of our guests in the gallery, Chairman Arsenio Balisacan, Commissioner Johannes Benjamin Bernabe and Commissioner Amabelle C. Asuncion.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). The presence of the above-named officers is hereby acknowledged. So, let us proceed with the interpellation now.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. TAN (A.P.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize Rep. Carlos Zarate of BAYAN MUNA Party-List to interpellate the Sponsor on the proposed budget of the Philippine Competition Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Cong. Caloy Zarate, you are recognized.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). Please proceed.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the good Sponsor yield to some questions pertaining to the budget of the Philippine Competition Commission?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Your Honor.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the PCC was created under Republic Act No. 10667, pursuant to the mandate of our Constitution that the State must intervene proactively, especially on issues of competition.

Now, under Section 2, in the Declaration of Policy of the law, it is clearly stated that consumer protection is one the duties of the State. In subparagraph (c) of that Declaration of Policy, it is stated that.

The State shall penalize all forms of anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position and anti-competitive mergers and acquisitions, with the objective of protecting consumer welfare and advancing domestic and international trade and economic development.

That is why when Congress passed RA 10667, the PCC was empowered to conduct inquiries or investigate anti-competitive behavior or abuse of the market, not necessarily when a complaint is filed, but even *motu proprio*, as stated under Section 12 of the law. Let me cite some relevant powers of the PCC, which I think are very important: it can conduct inquiry, investigate, and hear and decide on cases involving any violation of the law and other existing competition laws *motu proprio* or upon receipt of a verified complaint from interested party, et cetera; it will also monitor and undertake consultation with the stakeholders and affected agencies for the purpose of understanding market behavior; and it can also, among others, issue a *subpoena duces tecum* and a *subpoena ad testificandum* to enforce its powers.

So, in relation to this, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, I have some clarificatory questions. First, may the good Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, clarify to this Body, what is the primary and original jurisdiction of the PCC in the enforcement and regulation of all competition-related issues?

REP. SALCEDA. Well, they use the PDB, Your Honor, the Philippine Development Bank. They focus on the priority sectors.

REP. ZARATE. Well, I asked the original and primary jurisdiction ...

REP. SALCEDA. Oh, sorry.

REP. ZARATE. ... of the PCC in the enforcement and regulation of competition-related issues. Well, for the record, under Section 32, I think, of the law, it states that it has jurisdiction on issues that involve both “competition and even noncompetition issues, but the concerned regulator shall be consulted”, et cetera.

My clarificatory question in relation to this Section 32 is, will this section, under the law, oust the Regional Trial Court from taking cognizance of cases? Under Section 44 of the law as regards the RTC, it states:

The RTC of the city or province where the entity or any of the entities whose business act or conduct constitutes the subject matter of a case, conducts its principal place of business, shall have original and exclusive jurisdiction, regardless of the penalties and fines herein imposed, of all criminal and civil cases involving violations of this Act and other competition-related laws.

Are Section 32 and Section 44 in conflict with each other?

REP. SALCEDA. Mauuna po iyong PCC pagdating po sa subject matter na iyan bago po mapunta po sa DOJ, bago po siya pumunta ng korte. Ganoon po iyon. Kung may magreklamo po sa RTC, dadaan po iyan ng fiscal. Ang batas sinasabi, by implication, dahil po sa pag-atas ng Kongreso, kailangan na ibalik muna sa PCC para ma-establish po iyong, basically, empirical evidence for a probable cause.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. So, ang lumalabas po rito, parang ang PCC, in the filing of criminal cases, for example, kailangan munang dumaan sa PCC before pumunta ng prosecutor? Is that what the Sponsor is saying?

REP. SALCEDA. The practice right now, Your Honor, is that for such subject matter, the practice of the DOJ is to seek the endorsement of the PCC before filing the case.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor for clarifying that. Now, Section 2 of the law states that market competition benefits consumers because it gives them the “right of choice over goods and services.”

So, my question is, what about in cases of a monopoly like in telco, water, energy, oil? How does the PCC ensure that these monopolies do not commit anti-competitive behavior or abuse their dominant position to the prejudice of our consumers?

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi ho natin pini-penalize iyong pagiging monopoly niya kung hindi iyong paggamit ng kanyang monopolyo para abusuhin ang consumers. Halimbawa po, iyong presyo po ng texts o calls, may panahon po na dalawa lang ang mayroon, Globe at Smart, pero on a per second basis, ang Pilipinas po, noong panahon, ang may pinakamababang presyo dito po sa Southeast Asian Region. So, ipi-penalize ba

natin sila for making the price the lowest in the region just because the two have, essentially, a duopoly or two monopolies? So, in short, Your Honor, we punish the act or the violation but not the corporation.

REP. ZARATE. Kaya ko po itinatanong iyan ay dahil malinaw na malinaw nga sa batas, “all forms of anti-competitive agreements” or behavior ay kailangang i-penalize ayon sa batas para maproteksiyunan natin ang consumers. So, if it is in the guise of, for example, helping consumers but actually, in general, the welfare of the consumers is at risk, ano po ang magiging policy ng PCC rito?

REP. SALCEDA. Ang anti-competitive agreement *per se* is an act that already constitutes abuse or intent to abuse. So, being a monopoly, halimbawa, nagkataon na ikaw lang ang nandoon pero hindi mo naman inaabuso iyong consumer, hindi ho iyon pwedeng i-penalize ng PCC. Ang pini-penalize natin ay iyong act. So, the act here is the anti-competitive agreement, most probably leading to the abuse of consumers.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Now, considering that the power of the PCC or its role is now more defined, do the regulatory bodies like, for example, the NTC, the ERC—is there a need for these regulatory bodies to consult the PCC in the determination of the existence of, for example, anti-competitive behavior and abuse of markets, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, they have priority or primary jurisdiction even against the ERC when it relates to anti-competitive behavior.

REP. ZARATE. Okay. Now, if that is so, is there a need for PCC to wait for a complaint or a request or an instruction from these regulatory bodies before they can act on a particular issue, a referral?

REP. SALCEDA. Dalawa lang ho ang pinanggalingan niyan, complaint by a consumer—“nasaktan mo ako”—or ...

REP. ZARATE. Come again, Your Honor.

REP. SALCEDA. ... *motu proprio* po, based po sa quasi-judicial cognizance po of the Commission, they can, as a Board or as a Commission, look into a particular matter, Your Honor.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

My next question is, dahil totoo, bago ang PCC bilang isang kagawaran, so, at this point, ano po

ang tingin ng PCC sa usapin ng ating, for example, industriya ng oil? Sa tingin ba ng PCC ay mayroong cartel o mayroong nagmomonopolyo sa ating industriya ng oil? Pinag-aaralan na ba nila ito ngayon?

REP. SALCEDA. Mino-monitor po nila closely ang posible na collusion ng tatlong kumpanya subalit isinasaalang-alang nila na bukas na bukas po ang merkado, at kung sino man ang gustong pumasok ay wala naman pong hadlang, puwera na lang po, regulatorily, except, of course, may barriers to entry because of the big capital needed. Pangalawa, iyong importation po ay nandiyan din bilang isang threat.

Samakatuwid, ang sa dalawang, una, ito, na wala pong barriers to entry at pangalawa, na posibleng pasukin, kapag presyuhan mo ng mataas, magiging napaka-profitable, ay papasok po ang imports and therefore, this will force them to behave reasonably competitive, pero binabantayan po ng PCC.

REP. ZARATE. Maraming salamat sa paglilinaw na iyan, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

So, sinasabi po ba ng PCC, maliban doon sa kanilang pagabantay sa mga monopolyo, na pinag-aaralan din ng PCC, halimbawa, dito sa usapin ng oil, pinag-aaralan din nila kung bakit ba itong presyo ng langis sa panahong ito ay sabay-sabay na tumaas? Halos pare-pareho ang presyo ng mga kumpanyang ito, tapos, halos sabay-sabay ding bumaba nang kaunti at halos pare-pareho din ang pagbaba ng kanilang presyo. Ganoon po ba ang nangyayari ngayon, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Kung sa pulis, naka-heightened alert po siya. Ang hrap hong sagutin niyan kasi baka biglang itago iyong ebidensiya kapag sinabi ko sa iyong “oo” o “hindi.”

REP. ZARATE. At any rate, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, of late, ...

REP. SALCEDA. Probably, there are official statements. The PCC informs each office and does not make public its inquiries and investigation, probably to maintain the integrity of the evidence and effectiveness of the investigation process.

I think it says a lot with respect to your question.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Nitong nakaraan po, at dahil sa produkto ito ng naging imbestigasyon ng Kongreso sa kalakaran ng industriya ng langis, oil industry nitong nakaraan, o dahil po sa ginawa nating imbestigasyon sa

Kongreso, ang Department of Energy ay naglabas ng isang department order para imandato sa mga oil companies na mag-unbundle sila ng kanilang presyo, katulad ng kuryente. Sa kuryente natin, alam natin ano iyong binabayaran natin—ano iyong generation charge, ano iyong transmission charge, et cetera, pero sa usapin ng langis, hindi ho nangyayari iyan. Pagdating natin sa pumping station, nagpakarga ho kayo ng isang litro, hindi ho natin alam kung ano ba itong binayaran natin, magkano ang buwis dito, magkano ang ganansiya ng kumpanya, magkano ang landed cost, et cetera. So, naglabas po ang DOE ng kautusang ito.

Unfortunately, noong nailabas na ng Department of Energy, pagkatapos ng mahabang pagdinig at pagtulak ng Kongreso na ilabas na ito, nag-file ho ng kaso ang mga oil companies sa iba't ibang korte at ngayon ho ay may temporary restraining order na huwag munang ituloy iyong order na ito to unbundle.

Ang tanong ko lang po, dahil nasa korte na iyan, sa tingin po ba ng PCC, tama itong kailangang magkaroon ng isang kautusan na i-unbundle iyong presyuhan ng langis sa ating merkado katulad ho ng nangyayari sa presyuhan ng kuryente sa merkado, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Your Honor, sinu-support nila po iyong unbundling ng presyo pero unang-una po, may batas na po tayo na ang inuutusan po ng Kongreso ay ang DOE, sa kanyang Product Standards. With respect po doon, hindi naman po iyong cost structure kung hindi iyong unbundling po, kung ano iyong binibili mo doon.

Subalit sa karanasan po sa ibang bansa, kapag may mga ganoon po, nagiging mitsa tuloy ng kolusyon ng mga kumpanya kapag nagkakaalaman kung saan nanggagaling, halimbawa, ang langis niya at kung ano ang mga components nito. Iyan po iyong karanasan na siya naman po siguro ang nagbibigay po ng guidance dahil kung iisipin po, kapag transparent sila sa consumers, therefore, the consumer will have a choice. Unfortunately, these constitute already that level of detail, sharing of trade secrets among companies. It has the unintended consequence, and therefore, this may, in fact, be collusion.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

For my last issue related to that, is the PCC aware of the recent decision of the Supreme Court in the case of *ABP vs. ERC et al.*, and Meralco? This is the decision of the Supreme Court which nullified the lack of competitive selection process of power supply agreements by generation companies and distribution utilities, including Meralco. So, ang sinabi po ng desisyon ng Korte Suprema doon, hindi puwedeng hindi

dumaan sa competitive selection process beginning 2015, if I am not mistaken, ang lahat ng mga power supply agreements.

Sa katunayan, noong isinampa ang kasong ito sa Korte Suprema ay isinama namin ang PCC bilang nominal na respondent sa kaso, although I understand na hindi naman sumagot ang PCC doon. On hindsight, if the PCC is aware of this, what could the PCC have done to respond to the issue of anti-competitive behavior on the part of Meralco, for example, when out of these seven supply agreements, ang kanya hong ka-deal dito ay kanya ring mga sister companies? One company, in fact, is 100-percent owned or is a subsidiary of Meralco, the Atimonan one.

So, iyon ho ang tanong ko, is the PCC also monitoring the development and implementation of the decision of the Supreme Court na kailangang magkaroon ng competitive selection process sa mga power supply agreements, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. The position of the PCC is in support of the CSP.

REP. ZARATE. Okay, to support the decision of the Supreme Court, is that ...

REP. SALCEDA. Yes.

REP. ZARATE. Other than supporting, sa tingin ba ng PCC ay mayroon silang magiging active role in also looking at this kind of behavior, especially of big power companies?

Nakikita nga natin doon, for example, doon sa usapin ng competitive selection process, they are trying to skirt the conduct of bidding or competitive selection process, and even up to now, na mayroon nang desisyon ang Korte Suprema, they are still taking advantage of some grey areas doon ho sa conduct ng competitive selection process.

REP. SALCEDA. Sa sarili ko pong opinyon, at isinangguni ko rin sa kanila, iyong CSP po, ang intensiyon po talaga nito ay para mawala ang mga sweetheart deals na nilalabanan po ng kataku-takot na grupo dito sa Kongreso, subalit dahil po doon, iyong maliliit ay naiipit dahil baka hindi po sila makapag-participate doon po sa CSP process. So, iyon lang po iyong unintended effect. With respect to the PCC, generally, anything that promotes competition is good for them because CSP promotes competition; unfortunately, the market conditions under the current framework of our economy favor the big at the expense of the small.

REP. ZARATE. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker. Iyon lang po ang aking mga clarificatory question sa usapin ng budget ng PCC.

Maraming salamat po.

REP. SALCEDA. Salamat.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the Minority Leader, Hon. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Pichay). The Minority Leader is recognized, Hon. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr.

Please proceed.

REP. ABANTE. Mr. Speaker, magandang hapon po, Your Honor, aking kababayan, good afternoon.

Well, actually, it is my first time to hear about the Philippine Competition Commission. It means that either they are low profile or they are not doing anything because I have been very active in politics, even when I was not yet a Congressman. I rested for nine years and then came back, and I was told that the Philippine Competition Commission bill was in Congress in hibernation for 25 years. It was never approved. All of a sudden, during the tenure of the then President Noynoy Aquino, the Philippine Competition Commission was created by Congress. Is that right, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. Correct, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ABANTE. Now, I was wondering why it was never talked about in Congress for 25 years, perhaps, because the Philippine Competition Commission, if it became a law then, it would be construed as anti-big business. Am I right, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. It is against the collusion among big business. It is not against big business.

REP. ABANTE. It was construed to be anti-big business and then all of a sudden, it became a law, it was created.

REP. SALCEDA. It was supposed to be pro-consumer. Just because big business can be imports does not necessarily mean they are big; they are not big—for example, almost everything you see here came from China and therefore, does that make them big? No. So, is that subject to PCC? No. So, in short, Your Honor, it really is the consumer that is hurt because of the current market industry dynamics.

REP. ABANTE. Three years ago, it was created by virtue of Republic Act No. 10667, but since that time, Mr. Speaker, I have never heard about the performance of the Philippine Competition Commission—never heard. It is there but never heard.

REP. SALCEDA. Sir, they have decided to focus on high impact cases like the merger of PLDT and Smart, like the merger of Grab and Uber, and the merger of URC and Roxas Holdings with respect to sugar operations. So, iyong iba ipinasa, iyong iba hindi. Sila ang taga bantay po, so, iyong aso po natin ay hindi tumatahol pero nagbabantay po sa harap ng bahay at wala hong nakakapasok na magnanakaw.

REP. ABANTE. Okay. In 2018, the Philippine Competition Commission had a budget of P440,000,538; in 2019, it had a budget of P429,849,000; and in 2020, what we are trying to approve now, it has a budget of P435,100,000. Am I correct?

REP. SALCEDA. That is correct.

REP. ABANTE. Narinig ko rin na napakalaki ng income ng mga Commissioners ng Philippine Competition Commission.

REP. SALCEDA. I think a member of the Minority is a better resource person.

REP. ABANTE. Will you please make your tender voice louder, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi nga.

REP. ABANTE. Oo.

REP. SALCEDA. Alam mo po, Sir, kung i-compare mo po sa SCC, mas mababa sila.

REP. ABANTE. Saan?

REP. SALCEDA. Sa suweldo.

REP. ABANTE. Ng?

REP. SALCEDA. Sa suweldo ng mga Commissioners.

REP. ABANTE. Mababa?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes.

REP. ABANTE. Mababa po ba iyong six figures?

REP. SALCEDA. Sa ginagawa po nila, kailangan po talaga ...

REP. ABANTE. Well, I will ...

REP. SALCEDA. ... para po we can attract the best and the brightest in that area which is a very sensitive office because of what you deal with here, which may frighten investors or perhaps undermine consumer confidence, especially confidence in our markets. So, importante po para sa akin, kung ako ang tatanungin ninyo, saktong-sakto lang po iyong pera ng PCC.

REP. ABANTE. Oo. Well, Mr. Speaker, let me review it or remind the Sponsor and the Philippine Competition Commission of their mandate. Let me read it, "Vision," it says "The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) aims to be a world-class authority in promoting fair market competition to help achieve a vibrant and inclusive economy, and advance consumer welfare."

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, Sir.

REP. ABANTE. Are they true to their "Vision," Mr. Sponsor?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, as an economist, I can tell His Honor and I can assure the Gentleman, ang alam ko po sa buong mundo, no. 5 po sila pagdating po sa performance.

REP. ABANTE. No. 5?

REP. SALCEDA. Sa buong mundo po, ang Pilipinas po ay namumukod tangi na may isang working Competition Commission na siya pong nagbabantay upang harangan kung may mga balakin ang malalaking kumpanya na pagsamantalahan ang maliliit na consumer at kung may nangyari na po, upang ito po ay basagin.

So, sa pananaw ko po, Mr. Speaker, maganda po ang performance nila. Dito po sa Kongreso, sa usapin po ng Committee on Economic Affairs ay lagi po sila nating masasandalan upang magbigay po ng world-class information, lalong-lalo na sa mga pag-aaral patungkol po, halimbawa, sa 18 na industriya na malalaki po, umabot po ng halos 3.2 trillion na ang transaksyon na kanila pong napag-aralan, at ni isang reklamo o isang bahid o isang sigaw ng anomalya ay wala ho tayong narinig.

REP. ABANTE. Titingnan po natin mamaya iyan, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, pero ito po, I would like to be enlightened on this, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SALCEDA. Okay.

REP. ABANTE. For example, and to continue reading:

Mission: The Philippine Competition Commission shall prohibit anti-competitive agreements, abuses of dominant position, and anti-competitive mergers and acquisitions. Sound market regulation will help foster business innovation, increase global competitiveness, and expand consumer choices to improve public welfare.

Now, of course, this is not only the work of the Philippine Competition Commission, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, because other agencies are doing that as well. Now, it says further:

Our Role: The Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) is a newly constituted independent quasi-judicial body mandated to implement the national competition policy.

This is just for the record so that the people can be enlightened on their mandate in Republic Act No. 10667. This is the only time in which the people can publicly judge if any agency in government is doing well in its performance based on their mandates. Ito po ang nakalagay:

Enforce the Philippine Competition Act or RA 10667, which serves as the primary competition law in the Philippines for promoting and protecting market competition.

x x x

Over the last few years, our country has made significant strides in economic growth. Of course, this is not the monopoly of the Philippine Competition Commission when it comes to strides in economic growth. Amidst this positive momentum, there remains a challenge in attaining sustained and inclusive development where no one is left behind, there remains a challenge and after three years, it still remains a challenge,

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, you do not need to answer. I just would like to continue on:

The enactment of the PCA and the creation of the PCC aim to promote economic efficiency and insure fair and healthy market competition where everyone across our country from metro cities to far-flung communities can contribute to and benefit from economic developments.

Everyone, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, everyone, which, by and large, is not happening. "The PCC institutes a regulatory environment for market competition"—all of these blah, blah, blah.

Now, I would like to ask the first question, what is the PCC doing to break the monopoly on power generation and distribution in the country?

REP. SALCEDA. Isa-isahin po natin. Pagdating po sa generation, actually, iyong mga batas natin, lalo na ang EPIRA, ay tinanggal po ang gobyerno doon, so hindi na po siya monopolyo ng Napocor, kaya kung gusto mo pong mag-generate ng power, pupunta ka lang sa DOE, kunin ang regulatory process. Kung nagkataon po na iyong lahat ng generation ended up with only three companies, then, ang binabantayan po natin ay hindi iyong kanilang pagiging oligopolyo, kung hindi ay kung nagresulta ba ito sa injury to consumers.

REP. ABANTE. Darating po tayo diyan, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. The PCC, ito ang mandato nila. The PCC has not investigated Meralco and Aboitiz on their cross ownership between the distribution utilities and generation companies, ergo, the whole process from generation to distribution is being controlled by a single company, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, controlled by a single company from generation—to distribution.

Meralco, while primarily acting as an electricity distributor, has also entered into the power generation sector through its subsidiary, Meralco Powergen Corporation. MGen is now in the process of building two power plants in Quezon, targeting a portfolio of 3000 megawatts by 2020. Aboitiz, on the other hand, also operates three distribution companies—the Visayas Electric Company, Subic EnerZone, Lima EnerZone, and the Davao Light and Power Company. What am I trying to say? The monopolization of the power sector, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, among other reasons, has largely resulted in the Philippines having the most expensive electricity rates in Asia.

At this juncture, Deputy Speaker Pichay relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Raneo “Ranie” E. Abu.

REP. SALCEDA. I agree with the observation, Your Honor, but it is the ERC which has the primary jurisdiction because tayo po ang nagsabatas ng EPIRA. Itinuro natin—hindi ho natin ipinagbabawal na kailangan po kapag nasa distribution ka, bawal ka sa generation. Inilagay natin sa EPIRA na may mga maximum limits iyong cross holdings between sa mga companies sa generation and transmission. Ngayon, iyong pag-monitor po ngayon niyan ay nasa ERC. So, ngayon po, kung ito ay magdudulot ng sakit o ng injury sa consumers ay doon po mapipilitan pong pumasok ang Philippine Competition Commission dahil ibig sabihin po nito ay nagkaroon ng anti-competitive behavior.

REP. ABANTE. Hindi po ba nakakasakit, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, sa mga consumers na tayo po ang mayroong pinakamataas, pinaka-expensive na

electricity rate sa Asia? Hindi po ba nakakasakit sa bulsa, nakakasakit sa damdamin, nakakasakit po sa pamilya, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor? Nakakasakit po, masakit, napakasakit. So, ang tanong po ay kung mayroong dapat gawin ang PCC rito. Ang nais ko lang ay gawin ng PCC ang kanilang mandato...

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po.

REP. ABANTE. ...para po hindi masyadong makasakit dahilan po sa monopoly ng mga malalaki at mga higanteng mga kumpanya ng elektrisidad, kung saan kahit na nais nating yumaman ang karamihan sa mga Pilipino ay hindi yumayaman. Bakit po? Sapagkat napakataas ng bayad sa kuryente. Iyan po ay mandate, mandato po iyan ng PCC—opo, ang monopolization.

REP. SALCEDA. Tama po kayo. Ang mga electricity rates po sa Pilipinas ay regulated.

REP. ABANTE. Oo.

REP. SALCEDA. Ang ibig sabihin ng regulated ay hindi po iyan icha-charge sa iyo kung hindi natin pinayagan.

REP. ABANTE. Opo.

REP. SALCEDA. Ang inatasan natin na magbigay po ng approval niyan ay ang ERC. May isang bagay po doon sa rates na sinabi po ninyo, dahil po hindi naman lahat ng rates ay regulated, kung hindi ay mayroon po tayong tinatawag na WESM. Doon po sa WESM ay free market. Puwede kang bumili, lalong-lalo na kung sapat iyong...

REP. ABANTE. Ano po iyon?

REP. SALCEDA. Wholesale Electricity Spot Market.

REP. ABANTE. Opo.

REP. SALCEDA. Doon po sa WESM, kung minsan sumisipa at kung minsan dumadapa. May mga panahon pa nga na negative po iyon. Bilhin mo lang at sila pa ang magbabayad sa iyo. Mayroon pong ganoon sa WESM, pero ang masasabi ko, sa nakaraan na, ang WESM po ngayon ay wala na, pataas lang. Nagpapakita na baka dahil tatatlo lang ang seller, baka dahil dito kaya sumipa iyong presyo. Therefore, tumaas ang presyo ng kuryente dahil po sa anti-competitive behavior. Masasabi ko lang po na undergoing po, may current investigation. Gusto ko lang i-repeat, Sir, sa inyo that the PCC Enforcement Office cannot make public its inquiries and investigation and this is largely to maintain the integrity of the evidence and effectiveness of the process.

REP. ABANTE. Alam ninyo, maganda po iyong...

REP. SALCEDA. So, iniimbestiga po siya kaso hindi puwedeng pag-usapan...

REP. ABANTE. Maganda po iyong sagot ninyo.

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi po puwedeng ikuwento.

REP. ABANTE. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, maganda po iyong sagot ninyo sapagkat ako ay naniniwala na isa po kayo sa mga magagaling na ekonomista sa ating bansa, pero inuulit ko po, siguro kung kayo po ang hahawak ng PCC ay magiging maganda ang itsura ng Philippine Competition Commission. Ito po, ayon sa World Bank report, March of 2019, ito ha, ito ay dapat alam ninyo, hindi ba? “The Philippine economy is hampered,” sabi ng World Bank po ito. World Bank ito, mga kababayan, World Bank. Makinig kayo sa akin, World Bank, at anong sabi ng World Bank?—“The Philippine economy is hampered by monopolies, duopolies, and oligopolies in key markets.” Makinig po tayong lahat. Iyan po ang sabi ng World Bank. Gusto ko hong malaman kung ano ang masasabi po diyan ng PCC?

Ito pa ho, ang sabi po ng World Bank, World Bank, ito ha—mamaya na po, itutuloy ko lang ang sasabihin ko. The World Bank said, “The Philippine economy is ‘more concentrated’ than other economies in the region and that fostering fair market competition in key sectors can boost economic growth.” Ito po ay virtual insult sa PCC. It is an insult.

Last question na lang po, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. I am just being passionate in my delivery because, siyempre po, ang mga mahihirap po ang ano dito, hindi ho ba? Alam ninyo, kausap ko po iyong DTI. Seemingly, ang DTI ay hindi po naniniwala na may rice cartel, na mayroong garlic cartel, at mayroong cement cartel. Naniniwala po ba ang PCC na mayroong cement cartel, rice cartel, at garlic cartel?

REP. SALCEDA. Ang sagot ko po ulit, the PCC enforcement officers do not make public their investigations largely to maintain the integrity of the data and effectiveness of the process. In short, these are under investigation.

REP. ABANTE. Well, ako ay nagpapasalamat na sila po ay nag-iimbestiga. Kung puro imbestigasyon lang po iyan at wala pong resultang nangyayari ay walang maaaring mangyari. Look, ako po ay Konsehal ng Maynila noong 1992. Noong Konsehal po ako ng Maynila, kilalang-kilala na po ang Binondo cartel, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. Kilalang-kilala na ang Binondo cartel. Hindi ko alam kung bakit sa Maynila, alam na alam na may cartel—of course, wala pa iyong PCC

noong araw—pero bakit mayroong ilang ahensiya ng gobyerno na hindi alam na mayroong cartel?

Ngayon po, gusto ko pong sabihin, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, kung nais po ninyo na kaming nasa Minority bloc at ibang mga Congressman ay maniwala na may ginagawa ang PCC, na ang suweldo ng mga Commissioners ay nararapat sa kanila, dapat gawin nila ang dapat nilang gawin, Mr. Speaker, ...

Well, nais ko na po sanang i-terminate ito, pero mayroon pa pong isang magtatanong lamang. Kaya, Mr. Speaker, if you could recognize the next interpellator from the Minority.

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

REP. SALCEDA. Thank you, Minority Leader.

REP. ABANTE. Salamat po.

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

REP. TAN (A.P.). Mr. Speaker, the next Member of the House who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor is the Representative of the GABRIELA Party-List, Hon. Arlene D. Brosas. I move that we recognize her, Mr. Speaker, for her interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Representative from the GABRIELA Party-List, Hon. Arlene Brosas, is recognized.

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, honorable Sponsor, the PCC, while relatively new, has actually an important function, that is, to ensure that consumers are protected from anti-competition policies. There is a need, however, to inquire if the PCC is fulfilling its mandate in the advent of neoliberal globalization and rising concentration of wealth in the hands of the few. Sa pagtatala po ng PCC, saan-saang probinsiya at munisipalidad na nakalatag ang Maynilad at Manila Water, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. SALCEDA. I take it that you wish that the PCC to investigate it because there is no complaint officially lodged with the PCC. Right now, we would like, Your Honor, to say that *motu proprio*, they will take cognizance of your information and therefore, act accordingly. With respect to the same, i-update po namin kayo patungkol sa kung ano po ang status noong kanila pong pag-aaral.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, I was talking about the regulation of the water sector.

REP. SALCEDA. Your, Honor, hindi ho sila doon. Klarung-klaro naman po doon na—kasi ang nagre-regulate po ng water sector, atin pong inilagay sa different regulatory office, lalong-lalo na ng MWSS, may R.O. po diyan. Sila po ang nagre-regulate at pati na ang NWRB, na nandito po ngayon sa atin sa House bilang isa sa mga iminungkahi na gawin at i-rationalize. Kaya nga po, doon sa SONA, mayroon pong request ang ating Pangulo na una, mag-organize nga po ng National Water Resource Commission at Department of Water para po maging mas malakas ang atin pong pag-develop ng atin pong water resources; at the same time po, ang pangalawa, ma-regulate ang behavior ng mga players sa industriya; at pangatlo, para po magkaroon ng supply ng tubig para sa atin pong buhay.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, may we know if the PCC oversees, reviews and regulates the supply contracts and joint ventures by the two water concessionaires na mayroon po tayo in areas outside of Manila?

REP. SALCEDA. No, but tomorrow, they will, although there has been no complaint but so far, they have reduced big ticket already, almost 196, of which 181 were approved, one was blocked, a big company, URC and Roxas, one transaction. They pursued PLDT, Globe's acquisition of San Miguel telecom franchise, and Marubeni which is not a small company. Marubeni companies were fined. Ang sinasabi ko lang po, na kung minsan po para ma-prioritize, kailangan po may magdulong, lalong-lalo na po kung isang ordinaryong konsyumer ang nagrereklamo na siya po ay nasasaktan sa mga nangyayari po na pag-collude ng dalawang kumpanya.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, iyong scope po ng water privatization dito sa ating bansa, lalo na sa local level, mayroon po ba kayong ulat o report dito, kopya nito, whatever?

REP. SALCEDA. Ito po iyong mayroon, para mas malaman natin—manufacturing pero scoping pa lang kasi sa dami ng subsectors, rice, poultry and livestock, pharmaceuticals, land transportation, air transportation, digital commerce, state-owned enterprises and state subsidies, rural finance and agri credit, retail, logistic supply chain, milk products, fertilizers, corn milling and trading, sugar, pesticides, refined petroleum and telecommunications. Iyan po iyong masasabi natin na mga pinag-aralan na po ng atin pong Philippine Competition Commission. So, kapag nawala po sa listahan iyong tubig.

Samakatuwid, bukas po, pasisimulan na natin po ang pag-aaral ng balangkas ng industriya ng pag-deliver po ng tubig.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, mahalaga pong alamin iyong intervention ng gobyerno kaugnay sa usapin ng tubig, lalo na iyong mga kumpanyang sangkot, Maynilad at Manila Water. Noong nakaraan po kasi, kung naalala ninyo, grabe ang perwisyo na inabot ng ating mga kababayan sa rotation ng water, kawalan ng tubig, at karumihan ng tubig. Iyan po iyong mga inirereklamong serbisyo na dapat ay nagiging maayos habang sinasabi na nakakatulong iyong kompetisyon o pribatisasyon, pero alam natin iyong iniresulta nito. Nakababahala na hindi natin ma-account ngayon iyong paglarga ng privatization ng serbisyong tubig sa lokal na antas sa ilalim ng administrasyon na ito kasi ang sabi ninyo po, wala pa kayo ngayong data ng kung ilan ang pina-privatize na tubig lokal.

REP. SALCEDA. Magkakaroon po tayo.

REP. BROSAS. Lumalabas po konsentrado pa rin sa Maynilad at Manila Water ang pagsu-supply ng tubig natin sa loob at labas ng Metro Manila. Hindi po ba taliwas ito sa pag-iral ng kalakarang ito sa diwa at mandato ng inyong ahensiya? At the very least po, ang ini-expect natin sa PCC ay ma-exercise nito ang mandate nila na ma-review iyong mga joint ventures at kontrata na pinapasok ng Maynilad at Manila Water outside NCR o outside Metro Manila.

REP. SALCEDA. Buong industriya po para po ma-situate natin kung baka may technology transfer, lack of capital, at buong sektor po simula water origination, water drilling, water transmission, and water distribution.

Alam po ninyo doon sa amin sa Daraga, umayaw na po iyong LGU, so may karapatan din po iyong mga LGU natin to exercise their choice in entering into this joint venture contract. So, we will recognize that there is a potential anti-competitive behavior in the consolidation of water local districts. Number two, definitely, we will look into the joint venture entered into by Maynilad and Manila Water outside of Metro Manila where they have a franchise from the national government. So, those are the two basic things: one, the consolidation of water districts; second, the contracts entered into by Maynilad and Manila Water. So, we will summon them. We will first have to be friendly—how do you call that?—as we will request for information with respect to these two items, Your Honor.

REP. BROSAS. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, na maibigay ninyo sana iyong scope noong inabot ng privatization ng local water districts natin. Mahalaga po iyon. Sa pagtingin natin kasi, ang gusto nga natin ay mag-improve or gumanda iyong kalagayan dapat ng pagsu-supply ng tubig at paggamit ng tubig ng mga mamamayan natin. Hindi iyong tipong ganito na nagrereklamo ang mga tao dahil sa kawalan ng tubig, kadumihan ng tubig, et cetera, at saka may mga usapin pa ng pagmahal ng presyo ng tubig, samantalang iyong serbisyo na nga ay hindi ganoon ka-episyente. So, ito po iyong dahilan kung bakit gusto natin.

Now, to my next point po, Mr. Speaker, G. Isponsor, ito po ay tungkol sa report na mayroon tayong new players in the telecom industry, the Chinese-backed Dito Telecommunity and the Singaporean-backed NOW Telecom Company, Inc. May we know if the PCC has any intervention in the review and approval of the licenses of these additional foreign partner na telecom players.

REP. SALCEDA. Bago pa po binigyan ng franchise ng Kongreso, noong sila po ay pinili ng DICT bilang third telco player, marami na po tayong na-impose na kondisyon: una, kung pinagbawalan nga natin iyong PLDT-Globe na bilhin iyong San Miguel franchise, sinabihan na po sila ng Philippine Competition Commission na one of the conditions is, hindi ho sila puwedeng makipag-merger doon sa dalawa—either or both. Definitely, the Commission will consider it a violation of the competition policy.

REP. BROSAS. So, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, sinasabi po ba ninyo na wala tayong intervention na ginawa sa PCC? Wala?

REP. SALCEDA. Naglagay tayo ng kondisyon na hindi siya puwedeng makipag ...

REP. BROSAS. Hindi po ba weakness ito sa part ng PCC to ensure that the new players do not carry the potential of abusing their market position? Considering na implied support—alam ninyo naman po, ano, na sinusuportahan ng administrasyon iyong Dito Telecommunity—ah, community, oo—iyan, dahil—nalilito ako diyan, dahil sa Chinese-backed at mayroon po tayong mga articles na nagsasabi na malapit sa administrasyong Duterte or in close ties with the Duterte and the Cabinet members ang businessman na naka-link dito.

REP. SALCEDA. May pinirmahan po silang undertaking sa Philippine Competition Commission

na susunod sila sa mga kondisyon na inilatag upang sila po ay makapag-compete dito po sa ating merkado, lalong-lalo na lagi pong may tendency na ang mga malalaki, para lalong mas lumaki, sila po ay nagme-merger para magkaroon po sila ng bargaining position sa mga maliliit na consumers.

So, Your Honor, I think the intervention was appropriate, proper and significant.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, it is worth looking into, ano po, kung...

REP. SALCEDA. Hindi pa nga po sila nag-operate.

REP. BROSAS. ... ito po ba ay may potential for abuse, sa bahagi ng PCC, para mas maintindihan ng taumbayan kung ano ang implication nito, ng pagpasok ng mga panibago sa usapin ng industriya ng telekomunikasyon.

Recently, for example, it was reported that the AFP signed a deal with Dito Telecommunity, allowing the latter to put up towers and communications facilities within military bases nationwide. Is this kind of treatment accorded to other telecom players? Ibinibigay din po ba ito sa iba pang mga telecom players?

REP. SALCEDA. Although, Your Honor, hindi pa ho natin napapatunayan na may injury to consumers arising from anti-competitive behavior pero base po sa ating pag-aaral ay mayroong guidelines and the list is open to everyone. Naunahan lang sila and then, nakipag-usap kaagad itong telecom company. Iyong ibang telecom company, puwede na rin po nila iyang gawin. Wala hong humahadlang para sila po ay maglagay ng ganoong klaseng towers inside—how do you call that?—government facilities. Walang patakarin in writing or verbally na sila lang ang puwedeng maglagay ng mga facilities sa mga properties po ng government.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, we believe that the PCC must exercise its powers para matingnan po nila kung mayroong preferential treatment na nangyari o kung ano pa man, lalong-lalo na dito sa joint venture ng China Telecom at Udenna Corporation na naka-link even to President Duterte. This is precisely a form of anti-competitive behavior that presents serious risks, lalong-lalo na po sa ating national security, as it allows a Chinese company to tap our bases for its operations.

Ano pong masasabi ng PCC dito?

REP. SALCEDA. Definitely po, inatasan natin ang PCC na dapat walang consumers na masasaktan at nasasaktan ang consumers kung dalawa ang nagsasabwatan, lalo na kung ang kasabwat ay isang government agency. Samakatuwid, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, kapag titingnan natin po ang inatas natin sa PCC, kailangan nilang tingnan kung sakali po na may mga ganoong sitwasyon. Ito ay gagawan nila ng kaso para ma-fine, to file a case with the DOJ. Katulad po ng mga nangyari sa malalaking kumpanya like URC and Roxas Holdings, they blocked the transaction. Katulad po doon sa PLDT-Globe with the San Miguel telco, they prevented that merger.

In short, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, within the domain of the actions available to the PCC, they have been quite vigilant, lalong-lalo na po kung may nagrerekklamong consumer. Importante po na may magreklamo kasi hindi naman po abot, no matter how—it is not omniscient but definitely, those injuries, once they crop up, the PCC is mandated by law to look into them as an abuse of market power arising from anti-competitive behavior.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, maaari po bang, at the very least, ma-review iyong kontrata ng AFP with Dito Telecommunity, iyong pinirmahan nila. At the very least, pupuwede ba iyong ma-review ng PCC?

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, there is a long paper here. You want a copy of the undertaking?

REP. BROSAS. Yes.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes, I am fully convinced that the PCC is doing its job wonderfully, beyond what, probably, other entities in other jurisdiction would require. I would even say that it is preemptively interventionist, but on behalf of the small consumers, basically. In sum, we will print this.

REP. BROSAS. Yes.

REP. SALCEDA. We will print this as a copy is in my laptop, unless you want my laptop too. Essentially, to summarize it, it warrants that—not a related party to a dominant telco player, so, hindi lang po PLDT, Smart or Globe—it will not merge with a dominant telco player, and the participant hereby undertakes to notify the PCC for any co-use, interconnection or resource-sharing arrangements with other telecommunications firms. We will print a copy and give it to you before I sleep.

REP. BROSAS. Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor, sa pagbigay po ng kopya, sa pag-furnish ng copy sa amin noong kontrata.

Tungkol naman ito sa ibang topic—sa merger and acquisitions sa banking sector. Maaari po bang humingi ng report kaugnay ng mergers and acquisitions in the banking industry from 2016 up to the present? Kaya po namin hinihiling ang report na ito ay para malaman natin, dahil sa merger ng mga bangko, kung mayroon pong report ng mga pagkalagas ng mga empleyado at nalalaglag ang kasapian ng mga union. Sa ilang pagkakataon po, nalulusaw ang mga nakatayong union kapag nagkakaroon ng merger at acquisition, kaya mahalaga po na makuha namin iyong ulat kaugnay dito.

REP. SALCEDA. Definitely, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, unang-una, ang pinag-aaralan nila ay kung iyong transaction ay above P2 billion. Pangalawa, it is with respect po sa presyo o sa volume ng isang produkto na kinokunsumo ng isang consumer. In other words, kung mas mababa ito dahil mas mataas ang presyo, ito po ang pinaka-concern nila. With respect to the impact on the labor force, it is above broader in national concern, but I think I will give instructions to the PCC that, in all its other studies, if these will result in—kapag nagdagdag o lumaki ang kumpanya, nagdagdag po ng workers, dapat noted ito o ilagay sa report. Kung nagbawas ng workers dahil sa merger, dapat ilagay din po ito sa report. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, your suggestion is now being considered by the Philippine Competition Commission.

REP. BROSAS. Yes, thank you, Mr. Sponsor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, doon at sa request na report.

Last po at kaugnay po ito sa kung ano na iyong ginagawa ng PCC kaugnay sa price manipulation ng bigas. Alam po ninyo ito at familiar po kayo dito.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes.

REP. BROSAS. Ano na po ang ginagawa nila sa sinasabi na report na ang mga rice cartels ay nananaig ngayon? Ano po ang ginagawa ng PCC ngayon tungkol diyan?

REP. SALCEDA. The PCC started its investigation on this possible anti-competitive practice in August 2018, almost one year ago. The preliminary investigation ended in November 2018, and a full administrative investigation—in other words, this was scaled up in scope—is ongoing which started in November 2018 and this is with respect to the possible collusion. During that time kasi ay wala pa iyong RTL.

The PCC takes cognizance of the current situation, especially with respect to the impact of the Rice Tariffication Law on the dynamics of the rice industry, and there are several kinds of cartel behavior—one, price fixing; second, supply restriction; third, market allocation; and mostly, the rigging of bids in terms of procurement. We are looking at all of these, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, kasi nga po ang kanilang framework noon is under quantitative restrictions. Ngayon po, under the RTL, they need to revise their optics and the lens by which they analyze the rice industry but definitely, the conclusion of the DTI is wrong.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, naalala ko po ang news report noong nakaraan, at kayo na rin po ang na-cite doon, that it is a kind of an economic sabotage. Ano po ang pagtingin ng PCC at kailan lalabas ang report ninyo kaugnay dito?

REP. SALCEDA. Naku, kasi kailangan nilang magsimula ulit. Kailangan po nilang inspeksiyunin ang libro, kailangan pong tingnan iyong warehouse. Halimbawa po, sa isang bayan ko sa Albay, ang lahat po ng warehouse ay isa lang po ang may-ari, so, alam na natin kung anong mangyayari. So, kailangan natin ma-establish po iyong case facts. Hindi ho iyong akin pong conclusion dahil po bumagsak ng 5 percent—bumagsak ng 18 percent iyong presyo ng bigas, ng palay, pero halos po hindi po bumaba ang presyo ng retail.

Ang talagang buod noong Rice Tariffication Law, bababa po ito, na dahil ang imported rice ay pinayagang pumasok, therefore, dapat ito ang bababa pero ang dumapa ay iyong sa farmer. In short, in my own limited, ano, analysis ever since, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, and this is not just a suspicion, but I have seen this operate and now, with the PCC, we can have the basis to officially not only just investigate it but proceed with the—para po hindi na po maulit ito as there are what we call regional or localized monopsonists. In short, ang ating rice market ay single-buyer sa isang barangay, single-buyer sa isang bayan, at mayroon pa nga pong single-buyer sa mas mataas.

Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, pinag-aaralan naman po ng maigi para naman po hindi tayo ma-reject sa korte, kasi po, katulad nito na simula pa last year, August 2018, ay pinag-aaralan na, iniimbistigahan na po nila, kaya lang po ay hindi po puwedeng pag-usapan ang mga tao, ang mga lugar, dahil nga po mayroon tayong policy na the PCC information office does not make public its inquiries, its investigations, to maintain the integrity of the evidence and effectiveness of the process.

So, definitely, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, there is a rice cartel, but how do we prosecute them? I think the PCC is in the right direction.

REP. BROSAS. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, ibig sabihin ay kailangan po patunayan ng PCC ang hindi nito pagka-inutil sa isyu na ito.

REP. SALCEDA. No.

REP. BROSAS. Dahil napakahirap na ng kalagayan ng mga magsasaka ngayon.

REP. SALCEDA. Yes.

REP. BROSAS. Alam na alam po natin iyan dahil ang mga rice-producing regions natin ay talaga namang umaangal na. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, gusto ko lang sabihin, as my last point, na simula po nang na-create itong PCC, ilan na po ba ang kanyang nakasuhan, ang kaniyang na-penalize, ang kanyang naimbestigahan? Iyon po ang mga kailangan na malaman ng taumbayan para masabi natin na ang function talaga ng PCC ay nagagawa niya. Iyon lang po ang last point ko, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. SALCEDA. Sa full administrative—unang-una, 262 iyong inimbistigahan, iyong nasa preliminary inquiry na ay isa; iyong full administrative investigation ay 12; iyong ongoing, nine; adjudication, one; and closed cases, two. The cases that are now of public record involved cement, power, garlic, housing, telcos and rice. These are available on their website. With respect to mergers, kasi nga po ay tatlong klase po iyong iniatas natin sa kanila. Kapag binasa natin ang kanilang mandate sa ating batas, pagdating po sa mergers and acquisition, 196 ang na-review na nila. Umabot ng P3.21 trillion worth of transactions ang na-review na nila—181 approved transactions; one blocked transaction; one transaction pending in court; and three transactions fined.

Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, naniniwala ako na ginagawa nila ang trabaho nila. In fact, they are the fourth best in the world.

REP. BROSAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

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

REP. TAN (A.P.). Mr. Speaker, with leave of the House, I move that we recognize again, Rep. Bienvenido M. Abante Jr., the Minority Leader, for his interpellation on the proposed budget of the Philippine Competition Commission.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). By the leave of the House, I am recognizing the Minority Leader, Hon. Benny Abante, for his interpellation or manifestation.

REP. ABANTE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the PCC that we will closely monitor its work and performance because this is the House of the People. With that, Mr. Speaker, there being no more questions to be asked, with reservations, I move that we terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Philippine Competition Commission. *(Applause)*

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. TAN (A.P.). Mr. Speaker, we join the Minority in their motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Philippine Competition Commission.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; with the joint motion of the Minority and the Majority, the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budget of the Philippine Competition Commission is hereby terminated.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. TAN (A.P.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session to allow our guests and their technical staff on the floor to vacate the same and thereafter, allow the guests and the technical staff of the next department or agency to settle down.

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

It was 7:36 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 7:39 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

CHED, PUP, UP AND PhilSCA

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider the proposed budgets of the Commission on Higher Education, together with the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, the University of the Philippines and the Philippine State College of Aeronautics.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Is there any

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, to sponsor the proposed budgets of the said Commission and the State Universities, may we recognize Hon. Francisco Jose “Bingo” F. Matugas II, CPA, CESO, LLB, as Sponsor of the budget of the Commission on Higher Education, as well as the Hon. Paul Ruiz Daza as Sponsor of the budgets of the PUP, the UP and the Philippine State College of Aeronautics.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Honorable Matugas, Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Appropriations, is recognized to sponsor the budget of the Commission on Higher Education, as well as the Honorable Daza, also Vice Chairperson of the said Committee, to sponsor the budgets of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, the University of the Philippines, and the Philippine State College of Aeronautics.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, before we begin, may I acknowledge the presence of President Danilo Concepcion of the UP, President Emanuel de Guzman of the PUP, President Marvin Dela Cruz of the Philippine State College of Aeronautics, as well as Chairperson Prospero De Vera of the Commission on Higher Education, Commissioners Lilian de las Llagas, Ronald Adamat, Perfecto Alibin, Aldrin Darilag, and the rest of the officers of the Commission on Higher Education. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The UP family, Polytechnic University of the Philippines family, the Philippine State College of Aeronautics family, and the Commission on Higher Education family, headed by the Chairman, are recognized. Welcome to the House of Representatives. *(Applause)*

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, to interpellate our Sponsors, may I move that we recognize Hon. Arnolfo “Arnie” A. Teves Jr. from the Third District of Negros Oriental.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Gentleman from the Third District of Negros Oriental is recognized, Hon. Arnie Teves, to interpellate the good Sponsors.

REP. TEVES (A.). Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good evening, everybody.

Mayroon lang akong itatanong, there is this National Budget Circular No. 461 and I think this is the

one which will increase the Miscellaneous Personnel Benefits. Ang tanong ko, bakit ito pinigilan ng Joint Circular No. 1 ng CHED?

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, ang NBC No. 461 ay hindi po pinigilan and actually, ang nakasaad o nakalagay po dito na kailangan gumawa ng joint guidelines ang CHED at DBM. Pagkatapos, magiging effective lang po ito after six months kapag nag-sign na nila. So, hindi po pinigilan, actually.

REP. TEVES (A.). Ganito na lang to make it simple. Kailan ito puwede ma-implement? Can I have a timeline, Mr. Speaker, a specific date to be exact.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, based on the document that I am holding, the Joint Circular No. 1 was signed on August 30, 2019 and so, six months after po ng August 30—so September, October, November, December, January, February—most likely, it will be in February po next year, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. TEVES (A.). Sige, so, kung sigurado na iyan, then I will take that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

REP. MATUGAS. Thank you, Your Honor.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to interpellate from the Majority, Hon. Bong Teves from the Fourth District of Quezon City.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Correction, not Bong Teves but ...

REP. PALMA. Sorry, Bong Suntay, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The honorable Gentleman from Quezon City, Rep. Jesus “Bong” C. Suntay, is recognized for his interpellation of the Sponsors of the budgets being discussed today.

REP. SUNTAY. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If I can be allowed to propound some questions, a few questions, and a point of clarification from the distinguished Sponsors.

REP. DAZA. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will yield to the Gentleman.

REP. SUNTAY. Thank you.

For my education, may I know the extent and scope of the jurisdiction of the Commission on Higher

Education in terms of its powers to regulate and supervise pursuant to its Charter.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the mandate of the Commission on Higher Education is primarily, first is the implementation of RA 1031, followed by the enforcement of instruction, research and extension capacity of higher education institution, the support to faculty members and HEIs for the K to 12 Program transition, the provision of scholarship and financial assistance to students, and the supervision of all higher education institutions, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUNTAY. Therefore, all academic programs are included within this power to supervise and regulate, is this correct?

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

REP. SUNTAY. So, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, one of the programs is the Doctor of Medicine program. May I know if there is a specific body supervising this program in terms of admission of medical students? Is there a specific examination for admission? If yes, can you enlighten this Representation on the history and purpose of this examination?

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, Your Honor, there is a technical panel within the Commission on Higher Education which reviews the program and the review will be approved by the Commission. So, once the technical panel has submitted its review, it will be approved by the Commission, by all of its commissioners.

REP. SUNTAY. What about admission to medical school?

REP. MATUGAS. The exam is given by the Philippine Regulation Commission, the PRC po.

REP. SUNTAY. No, that is admission to medical practice para magamit mo iyong title na MD sa dulo ng pangalan mo after graduating from medical school, pero kailangan you have to pass the licensure exam.

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, the board exam.

REP. SUNTAY. Ang punto ko, kunwari, a requirement before you can go to med proper is that you need a pre-med course. So, pagkatapos ng pre-med mo, kapag pumasa ka na, nag-graduate ka ng pre-med course at gusto mong maging doktor, is there a requirement before you could gain admission to a medical school?

REP. MATUGAS. It is the NMAT, Your Honor.

REP. SUNTAY. With regard to this NMAT, can you enlighten this Representation on the history and purpose of this NMAT?

REP. MATUGAS. This is an admission test. As the acronym implies, it is given to the medical student and it requires a 40-point average to be admitted.

REP. SUNTAY. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, so, among pinaka-purpose nito? Nag-aral ako ng college o nag-pre-med ako, nag-graduate ako ng pre-med, and I decided to pursue med school, so, ibig sabihin, kapag nag-med school ako, first year muna iyan—first year, second year, parang sa law lang iyan, that after we graduate from a pre-law course, we pursue law, ganoon din, four years. So, why is NMAT required before you gain acceptance to a medical school?

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, the NMAT checks the preparedness of the student in getting into med school. It is similar to, if we will have an analogy, during the earlier times, it is like the NCEE exam given to high school students before being admitted to college.

REP. SUNTAY. So, ang basis, ang determining factor for me to be able to pursue my dream to become a doctor is an NMAT exam, iyon ang determinant, but the NMAT is an IQ and aptitude test and it does not specifically center on science subjects or questions which are necessary for medical school.

So, ibig sabihin ko lang, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, kunwari ako, nag-aambisyon akong maging doktor at apat na taon akong nag-aral ng biology dahil gusto kong maging doktor, pero dahil lang hindi ako pumasa ng NMAT, hindi ko na puwedeng i-pursue iyong aking matagal nang panaginip na maging doktor dahil lang sa NMAT? Is it not that the reason that I will go to a medical school is to learn to become a doctor?

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, Your Honor, pero iyong NMAT po, may mga subjects po doon ng science and biology to measure the preparedness of the students to be admitted to medical school.

REP. SUNTAY. So, iyon lang iyon, just to see if—papaano kung late bloomer ako? Some students are like that, they are late bloomers but in the course of the learning process, they start appreciating the subjects and they get better grades, better scores.

REP. MATUGAS. The admission to the medical school requires a standard, so, the NMAT is one of those standards.

REP. SUNTAY. Yes, but admission to the medical practice requires a more, a better standard and that is understandable because when you proceed to your medical practice, people will be under your care and that is why you have the licensure exam. Ito, simula pa lang ito, nag-uumpisa pa lang ako but well, just to go forward with my questions, I would like to know if the requirement for NMAT, is this a requirement only for Filipino students or it also includes foreign students?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, may I ask for a one-minute suspension of the session?

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

It was 7:50 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 7:51 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

REP. MATUGAS. Sa NMAT po, allowed ang lahat na mag-take regardless of whether you are a Filipino or foreigner.

REP. SUNTAY. Ibig sabihin, hindi allowed? Required lahat regardless of whether you are a Filipino or ...

REP. MATUGAS. I mean required. I am sorry, required.

REP. SUNTAY. Okay. Well, kaya ko naitatanong ito because I have three points later on, so, I will be delivering three points. My first question kanina would later on reflect iyong isang punto ko. Now, would you know the difference in terms of privileges and restrictions between Filipino and foreigners in the practice of the profession in the Philippines?

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, with regard to the practice of a profession, hindi po allowed ang foreigner mag-practice under sa batas natin.

REP. SUNTAY. So, the foreigners are not allowed to practice medicine in the Philippines; however, they are allowed to study and take the med course proper in the Philippines.

REP. MATUGAS. Yes po, Your Honor.

REP. SUNTAY. So, babalik ako at i-connect ko ito doon sa unang punto ko. Why is NMAT a requirement for both a Filipino and a foreigner, and also considering that the foreigner would not be allowed to practice in the Philippines anyway?

REP. MATUGAS. Well, Your Honor, it is a matter of quality, of checking the aptitude of the students. The NMAT is just one of those exams. There is also another exam that is given by the medical school.

REP. SUNTAY. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, ang hindi ko ho maintindihan, iyon ho ulit, iyong NMAT determines the quality of the student, ganoon ba iyon? Ibig sabihin, kung minalas ako sa NMAT at hindi ako pumasa, wala na iyong apat na taon na tsansa ko sana na matuto pa, na mag-aral pa para maging doktor? Parang it does not follow.

When I was in law school, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, noong first year ko sa law school, it was the first time I saw so many valedictorians, so many cum laudes na kaklase ko, but being a valedictorian or cum laude does not ensure them of passing the bar exam. So, ang ibig sabihin noon, it is not also a determining factor. Like what I said earlier, some students learn in the course of going to school.

REP. MATUGAS. I am sorry, Your Honor, can you repeat your question please?

REP. SUNTAY. So, bumabalik lang ako to belabor a point. I think what you are pointing out is, the NMAT is being used in the Philippines to screen them, to make sure that there are qualified medical students in the Philippines. Kailangan pumasa muna sila ng NMAT kasi parang it is an assurance na kung pasado sila ng NMAT, maaaring sila ay magiging magaling na mga doktor at puwede silang mag-practice dito sa Pilipinas kapag naging doktor sila. Is that your point, Mr. Speaker?

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. SUNTAY. If that is your point, Mr. Speaker, then I will go back to my earlier point: Why is it also a requirement for foreigners, considering that a foreigner is not allowed to practice the medical profession in the Philippines. So, there are two sets of standards then, na it may be a requirement for Filipinos but not a requirement for foreigners.

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, with regard to the practice of profession by foreigners in our country, under our Constitution, it is not allowed. It is defined in our Constitution that it is not allowed.

REP. SUNTAY. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Well, I am aware that it is not allowed, Mr. Speaker, and I will go

back—kaya ko ito itinatanong because this relates to CHED Memorandum Order No. 18 which was issued by the Commission on Higher Education which, in fact, bothers me even more. I think it is Article VI, Section 22.3 of that said provision tungkol doon sa assessment ng mga eskuwelahan. The basis for the assessment is well, of course, iyong passing number of the students ng isang eskuwelahan sa PLE, sa Philippine licensure exam. Pangalawa is the weighted average that they get. Iyong pangatlo is the result of the joint observation conducted by the Commission on Higher Education and the PRC, hindi ba? Iyon ang nagiging basis. Now, ang punto ko dito, ito iyong basis. Now, if the school gets 50 percent or below na passing percentage sa PLE, ang nagiging censure, ang nagiging sanction is, una, I think, the monitoring of the CHED. Pangalawa, the passing requirement for NMAT is higher. It now goes higher to 50 percent. Pagkatapos noon, there is a one year supervision. This bothers me dahil alam naman natin ang nangyayari, na ina-assess iyong performance ng school. So, kapag sa assessment nila ay hindi maganda iyong performance ng school, ang makukuha mo sa sanction is, maghanap tayo nang mas magaling na estudyante para tumaas iyong passing percentage. Hindi ba mali? Hindi ba dapat iyong sanction is not to look for better students who will enroll, but it is improving the curriculum of the school.

Doon sa sanction na ini-impose natin, tinaasan natin to 50 percent iyong NMAT, so, ang sinasabi natin, para tumaas iyong passing percentage nila sa licensure exam, ay humanap sila nang mas matatalinong estudyante, which is wrong, hindi ba? I-improve mo iyong curriculum ng school. So, there is something wrong with CMO 18.

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, that CMO that you are discussing is still under review.

REP. SUNTAY. I have three points and they affect—first, my earlier point is that, kawawa naman iyong mga estudyante, the Filipino students who wish to become medical practitioners, at bata pa lang ay pinaginipan na nila maging doctor. Nag pre-med, pagkatapos, dahil lang hindi nakapasa sa NMAT, biglang hindi na puwedeng mag-aral ng pagdodoktor. Hindi naman sila magpa-practice kaagad dahil kailangan pumasa sila pa ng board exam for medicine before they could practice, and that should be the determining factor, the board exam. They should be given a chance to learn. So, kawawa iyong mga Filipino.

Pangalawa, iyong mga foreigners. Madami na ditong nag-aaral na mga foreigners. In fact, this is a welcome development for medical schools in the Philippines, but because of the requirement of the NMAT, at kahit hindi sila puwedeng mag-practice dito dahil tinaasan natin iyong score, madami ngayong

foreign students who are not able to continue their medical education here in the Philippines. So, dalawa na iyong naapektuhan.

Pangatlo are the medical schools. A lot of small medical schools rely on these foreign students, at dahil iyong provision ng CMO 18 na tinaasan actually iyong requirement, iyong passing percentile to 50 percent, madami ngayon iyong hindi makapag-enrol for medicine proper, so, iyon ang mga punto ko.

My last point, when did the law take effect?

REP. MATUGAS. In 2016, Your Honor.

REP. SUNTAY. No, the law, the provision of the law says that it shall take effect 15 days after its publication in the *Official Gazette*. My question is, when was it published in the *Official Gazette* so we will know when the fifteenth day was? There is a provision in CMO 18 that states that the application of the provisions of the CMO shall take effect three years after its effectivity.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, per information given to me, that CMO was published in newspapers of general circulation last 2017.

REP. SUNTAY. Okay then, that is another point that I would want to belabor. It was published in 2017. The provision of CMO 18 states that it will take effect three years after its official publication, but it is already being implemented. Dapat sa School Year 2020 to 2021 i-implement iyan. So, bakit ganoon? Is it not unfair that you are implementing CMO 18 even if your very own CMO states that it should take effect three years after its publication in the *Official Gazette*?

REP. MATUGAS. As of now, Your Honor, the Commission on Higher Education is reviewing the CMO.

REP. SUNTAY. So, while it is being reviewed, should we not allow the students to be admitted even if they did not receive 40 percentile points in their NMAT?

REP. MATUGAS. Commission Chairman Popoy is saying that the Commission will discuss it.

REP. SUNTAY. No, they should not discuss it because the law says, the order states that it shall take effect, if you count it, 2020 to 2021. Considering na-advance nila iyong implementation, then they are doing something wrong.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, the Commission is willing to withdraw or to stop the implementation of that CMO.

REP. SUNTAY. Thank you very much. I would like to have a report from the Commission on Higher Education kasi kawawa naman iyong mga estudyante at saka iyong mga paaralan.

Maraming salamat ho, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to interpellate is Hon. Ferdinand Gaite of BAYAN MUNA Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. (Rep. Abu.). Hon. Ferdinand Gaite, Representative of BAYAN MUNA Party-List, is recognized for his interpellation of the Sponsors of the budgets of the Commission on Higher Education and other State Universities and Colleges.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker. Pahihintulutan ba ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor ng budget ng SUCs na makapagpalinaw sa ilang mga katanungan, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. (Rep. Abu). Mr. Sponsor, you are being asked.

REP. DAZA. Yes po, Mr. Speaker, I will yield to the Gentleman from BAYAN MUNA.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor. Ang aking katanungan ay kaugnay sa budget ng isang ahensiya at ayon sa website ng naturang ahensiya:

x x x considered the biggest modern government tertiary hospital in the Philippines, servicing more than 600,000 patients annually. It remains as the only national referral center for tertiary care providing direct and quality patient services to thousands of indigent Filipinos all over the country.

Ang tinuturing ko po ay walang iba kung hindi ang Philippine General Hospital located in Taft Avenue. Hindi na ho ako magpapaligoy-ligoy pa, considering na ang ating pinakamahalaga at pinakamalaking pampublikong tertiary hospital sa bansa ay ang PGH. Sa kasalukuyan ba ay masasabi natin na sapat ang pondo ng PGH para gampanan ang kanyang tungkuling magbigay ng serbisyong nabanggit, na kailangan ito ay globally competitive, cost effective, compassionate and with accessible health care para sa ating mga mamamayang Pilipino, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor? Sapat ba ang pondo

ang nakalaan para sa ating pangunahing ahensiya na nagbibigay ng serbisyong pangkalusugan sa ating mamamayan, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, the Philippine General Hospital is, as correctly stated, a Level III training hospital. The proposed 2020 budget of the PGH in the NEP is P2.9 billion, and we estimate that the shortage o ang kulang po is about P2 billion.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Sponsor.

Two billion ang kakulangan at kung ihahambing din muna natin doon sa aktuwal na budget noong 2019 at sa proposed GAB for 2020, dito pa lamang ay nag-suffer na ng decrease by about 14 percent, from P3.2 billion in 2019 as approved under the GAA 2019 pero ngayon sa 2020, P2.77 billion ang nakalaan na budget or a reduction of P456 million. Tama po ba ako, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. DAZA. Tama po iyon, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Batay doon sa nakuha ng aming opisina hinggil sa ni-request ng PGH para sa pangangailangan nito sa Personnel Services, Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses at Capital Outlays, ang original proposal ay aabot dapat ng, base sa data na nakuha namin, ay P4.5 billion at ang inilaan lang ngayon ay P2.77 billion. Tama po, ano? Kulang-kulang na P2 billion or about 38.45 percent less than what the PGH had requested. Tama po ba iyon, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. DAZA. Tama po iyon, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. Ang isang napansin din po namin dito sa budget na pino-propose, ang laki ng kaltas, unang-una, sa Capital Outlays. Walang inaprubahan na increase sa proposed P88 million doon sa 2020 GAB—100 percent zero. Doon naman sa Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses, malaki rin ang kinaltas at from P1.4 billion, ang binigay lang ay P784 million or a reduction of 43 percent. Sa Personnel Services, iyong kailangan para sa ating mga manggagawang pangkalusugan katulad ng doctors, nurses, health workers, gayundin ang aming naobserbahan, na mula sa P3 billion budget, ang inaprubahan ay kulang-kulang P2 billion na lamang or a reduction of almost P1 billion or 34.21 percent reduction.

Maaari bang ipaliwanag ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, ano ho ang mga dahilan kung bakit kinakaltasan ng ganitong kalalaki na budget doon sa premier government hospital, na marami sa mga pasyenteng nito ay mga indigent, mga maralita, mga ordinaryong naghahanap ng serbisyong pangkalusugan,

ngunit bunga ng liit ng budget ng ating PGH ay malaking katanungan kung kaya pa bang ibigay ang serbisyo sa ating mga maralita, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much to the Gentleman for pointing out accurately what had happened to the budget of the Philippine General Hospital for the Fiscal Year 2020 proposal. In fact, this Sponsor is disappointed, not just only for the PGH, but for some of the other state universities wherein the DBM drastically reduced the requested budgets of their respective offices. Please allow me, Mr. Speaker, to assure the Gentleman from BAYAN MUNA that the officials, the doctors and other employees of the PGH will do their best to continue giving good service for the thousands of patients that they handle every year.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, dahil kaisa ninyo po kami doon sa pagkadamay ng pagkatay sa budget ng PGH na kailangan na kailangan ng ating mga mamamayan. Talagang isang malaking katanungan kung bakit sa halip na dapat social services ang bibigyan ng diin, na pangunahing ipinagmamalaki, ay iyong premier hospital ng gobyerno ay tinitipid at binabawasan pa nga ng budget.

Matanong ko po ito dahil nakita nga po namin dito na may reduction na 100 percent doon sa Capital Outlays. Para saan po ba ito? Kanina po, during the interpellation sa ating Department of Health budget, nabanggit ng ating mga manggagawang pangkalusugan sa ilalim ng Alliance of Health Workers at iba pa na gusto nila sanang ipambili iyong budget sa Capital Outlays para sa respirators. Nakakalungkot na binanggit nila at binalita nila na napakarami na daw pala na mga indigent at mga ordinaryong mga pasyente ang namatay dahil hindi available iyong equipment na ito. Puwede ho bang mabanggit sa atin kung para saan ho ba itong Capital Outlays sana na na-slash mula sa budget ng PGH, Mr. Speaker, ating Sponsor?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, the proposal of the PGH for Capital Outlays concerns the medical equipment needed for specialty practices like ventilators, equipment that we need for lung cases, cardio heart cases, and other specialty type of equipment.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po sa kasagutan, Mr. Sponsor.

Nakakabahala dahil ang mga normal equipment na ito ay talagang kailangan na kailangan para sa pagpapagaling at pag-sustain ng buhay ng ating mga pasyente. Sa halip, ganyan nga po iyong na-report noong ating mga kasamahan na mayroon na nga hong namatay, at ilan na talaga ang mga namatay, dahil sa kakulangan ng equipment doon sa Capital Outlays. Para sa isang ospital na dapat ito iyong uliran o ehemplong ospital,

iyong basic na mga gamit tulad nitong ventilators—ano po iyong nabanggit?—lung equipment at cardiovascular equipment, ay hindi sapat sa kasalukuyan.

Matanong ko po naman, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, doon sa papaliit na dagdag sa MOOE o Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses ng PGH, kapos itong P610 million sa hinihingi ng PGH. Ano ang katanggap-tanggap na dahilan, Mr. Sponsor, para hindi ibigay ang kailangan para makapagpatakbo ng isang ospital na may maraming pangangailangan ang ating mga pasyente, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, it seems to be happening across all agencies—the DBM has cuts on the funding requests not just of the PGH, but also of other institutions and other agencies and unfortunately, there were no specific reasons for the cuts.

REP. GAITE. Tama po, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, na parang arbitrarily nagkakaroon ng mga slash na walang paliwanag, ngunit alam naman natin na hindi naman maglalabas ng proposed budget ang mga ahensiya na hindi naman nakabatay sa mga pangangailangan nila, kung kaya nagtatanong ang Kinatawang ito.

Ngayon po, mayroon pong isang observation dito sa ating PGH. Kulang na kulang na iyong budget nila. Halimbawa, sa emergency room, may 25-bed capacity lang ito dahil under renovation—tama po ba?—ang ating emergency room sa PGH?

REP. DAZA. Tama po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. GAITE. So, under renovation ito pero sa aktuwal, sa isang araw, ay umaabot ng halos 150 patients ang inaasikaso ng PGH at nagkakaubusan ng stretchers at wheelchairs sa emergency room. Papaano ho ba ang policy ninyo dito ngayon? Bring your own stretcher and bring your own wheelchair na ho ba sa PGH, kagalang-galang na Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, kung minsan po, hindi lang 150 pero umaabot ito ng 200, pero magaling po iyong mga doktor at saka iyong medical director natin at somehow, nakakagawa po ng mga adjustment kapag mayroong mga emergency situation.

REP. GAITE. Two hundred.

REP. DAZA. Kapag nagsosobra-sobra po ang mga pasyente, Mr. Speaker, sa emergency room, inililipat po iyong iba kaagad sa ward para ma-accommodate iyong mga bagong pumapasok.

REP. GAITE. Pakiulit po, medyo nag-echo. Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker, ano po iyong pagka ...

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, sabi ko po, tama po iyon. Hindi lang 150, minsan po ay 200 ang nasa emergency. Ang mga doktor at ng nurses, on the spot, gumagawa po sila ng adjustment. Iyong iba sa emergency room ay inililipat po kaagad sa ward.

REP. GAITE. Sa ward.

REP. DAZA. Opo. Sa mga puwedeng ilipat na, na-stabilize na iyong condition, puwede na pong ilipat iyong mga pasyente. Iyan po ang ginagawa ng mga medical practitioner po natin.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po sa pagsagot, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

Papaano ho ba napupunuan iyong mga pangangailangan ng PGH sa kalagayan na kapos na kapos iyong pondo nila? May iba pa bang sources ng fund o services o programs ang PGH para mapunuan itong obviously, patently, kulang na kulang na facilities para mapunuan iyong pangangailangan ng dumadagsa na mga pasyente sa ating PGH, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, the PGH, just like all hospitals in the country, tries to maximize the collections from the PhilHealth. So, in the case of the PGH, there is a little bit of funding coming in from the reimbursement of the PhilHealth claims. Another source that augments the deficiencies in the budget of the PGH is the funding coming from the DSWD, sometimes from the PCSO and in other cases, also from the DOH Medical Indigency Program.

REP. GAITE. Tanong ko po, mayroon po bang naitutulong itong sinasabing services sa ilalim ng Malasakit Center? Iyong Medical Assistance Program? Iyong medical assistance funds sa naturang ahensiya, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, malaking tulong iyong Malasakit Program po natin sa PGH, at hindi lang po sa PGH, kung hindi pati sa iba pang mga ospital. Mayroon pong dinadagdag na pondo from the Social Fund ng Presidente na binibigay po sa PGH, at iyang pondo po na idinadagdag, nili-liquidate po iyan ng ospital at kapag na-liquidate na, nagdadagdag po ulit ang Office of the President.

Ang isa pong trabaho ng Malasakit Center is to assist the patients para hindi na po sila lalabas pa para lang makakuha ng dagdag pambayad galing sa PCSO. Kung minsan po, kahit po PAGCOR, nakakapagbigay nang kaunti. May mga kinukuha din po tayo na pandagdag na galing sa DSWD at sa DOH para sa mga pasyente natin.

REP. GAITE. Hindi ko alam kung matutuwa ako doon sa sagot o hindi kasi para pong begging for donations and other sources. Katulad nitong donations na kung mayroon, good, pero kung wala, sorry. Malaki ho ang tingin namin na, sa halip na umasa tayo sa philanthropic na tulong galing sa mga ibang may matatabang pusong tumutulong sa ating PGH—na alam kong mayroon naman—dapat tungkulin ng Estado, ng government, na mag-ensure na mayroong sufficient funds para maipagpatuloy ng PGH ang kanyang serbisyo. Kung mayroon mang dagdag na donasyon, ito ay paraan pa para lalo pang mapaunlad, mapa-expand at mabigyan ng tamang serbisyo ang ating mga pasyente, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, tama po iyong observation of the Gentleman. Our health care problems partly stem from very inconsistent funding for our public hospitals; and second, the fragmented funding mechanisms, as pointed out by the Gentleman. He mentioned the Malasakit Center. The goal of the Malasakit Center is to coordinate various funding mechanisms with the objective of helping the needy and indigent patients. Malaking tulong po iyon, na kahit po sa sinabi po noong Gentleman na kulang ang pondo ng PGH, ang naitutulong po ng Malasakit is makadagdag ng pondo na makakatulong sa pasyente at sa hospital.

REP. GAITE. Maraming salamat po sa kasagutan. Mabuti nabanggit din po ninyo ulit iyong Malasakit Center, pero para doon sa mga kasama natin sa PGH, ang kanilang komentaryo dito sa Malasakit Center, ang tawag nila dito ay “Pasakit Center” kasi diumano, ang Malasakit Center, sa bawat opisina ay may kanya-kanyang pila at assessment ang social worker. Worse pa raw, ang PCSO sa PGH ay may quota lamang na 30 patients per day, kasama ang pag-accept ng outpatient, at may isang staff lamang. Kaya kung may naitutulong man ito, hindi talaga sapat din sapagkat napakaliit. It only creates a small dent on the possible 200, at doon pa lamang sa ER ang pinag-uusapan natin; doon sa iba pang non-ER patients, siguradong napakalaki pa ng pangangailangan.

Panghuling tanong: Napag-usapan natin ang MOOE at iyong Capital Outlays. Hindi po makakapagbigay ng serbisyong pangkalusugan kung wala iyong ating mahahalagang mga manggagawa, iyong ating mga nurses, mga health workers, ang ating mga doctors at iba pa. Ang tanong po namin—totoo bang 20 porsiyento ng kawani ng PGH ay kontraktwal, Mr. Speaker, ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, dati po mga 20 percent, pero 10 percent na lang po iyong mga job orders at contractuals.

REP. GAITE. Natanong ko po ito kasi sa nakuha naming datos, hanggang ngayon, hindi nare-regular iyong 435 na mga job orders sa PGH at 260 naman sa UP Manila. Sila po iyong tinatawag nating “job orders,” “contracts of service,” at kasama na rin iyong ating mga casuals at contractuals. Ano ho ang dahilan? Bakit hindi pa ho natin nareregularisa itong ating mga manggagawang hindi regular, Mr. Speaker?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Gentleman for bringing that up. Those job orders are now in the process of being regularized, but unfortunately, some are not qualified and therefore, will be not be regularized. The process has started, and I assure the Gentleman that the qualified employees will be regularized very soon.

REP. GAITE. Thank you for that assurance, Mr. Sponsor, sapagkat sa aming nakuha ring information, marami sa kanila ay matatagal na sa serbisyo ng PGH. Tama naman po iyong ilang suliranin hinggil sa qualifications, na problema ng mga contractual workers, kung kaya ang Kinatawang ito sa ilalim ng BAYAN MUNA ay naghapag na rin ng panukalang batas para ma-address iyong ating mga kawaning kontraktwal na hindi pa sapat ang kanilang kwalipikasyon pero kung mayroon silang sapat na bilang ng panahon sa pagtatrabaho ay puwede nang kapalit ito o substitution sa binabanggit na qualifications tulad ng eligibility at iba pa.

Ang isa pang nababahala po kami ay iyong ulat na papaubos na raw iyong utility workers sa ating PGH. Sila iyong mga nagtutulak ng stretchers, wheelchairs, taga kuha ng mga gamit at supplies. As of 2018, 460 na lang daw ang natitirang utility workers at wala nang dagdag sa hiring. Ano ho bang nangyayari sa ating mga utility workers sa PGH? Ito ba ay ibubukas sa mga agency-hired na mga empleyado, gaya ng nilalaman ngayon ng CSC-COA-DBM Joint Circular No. 1, series of 2018, na sinasabing gagamit na ng mga institutional contract of service sa halip na gawin silang regular sa PGH dahil regular naman ang ginagawang trabaho ng ating mga utility workers sa PGH, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, the DBM discouraged low salary grade items, and because the utility workers are in Salary Grade 4, that is a concern. The hospital has been advised to look at all options, including outsourcing, because of that particular problem.

REP. GAITE. Muli, nadidismaya kami doon sa report ng ating Sponsor sapagkat kahit na iyong sinasabing maliliit na empleyado, sila rin ay may karapatan.

Ang PGH ang pinakamalaking ospital na tinatakbuhan ng mga mahihirap, pero tinitipid, kinakaltasan ng budget

ng gobyerno. Samantala, ipinalolobo ang budget sa paniniktik sa mga ahensiyang inuugnay sa political at extrajudicial killings, pinangangalandakan ang mga abuloy sa mga pasyente sa anyo ng medical assistance funds at programs, kinukontraktwal pa ang ating mga manggagawang pangkalusugan. Kaya hindi kami naniniwala na talagang iyong programang Malasakit ay talagang malasakit sa ating mga mamamayan. Sa tamang panahon, ang Kinatawang ito ay gagawa ng kaukulang mosyon para maibalik ang karapat-dapat na budget ng PGH para maibigay ang karapat-dapat na serbisyo sa ating mamamayan.

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

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to interpellate is Hon. France L. Castro of the ACT TEACHERS Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Hon. France Castro of the ACT TEACHERS Party-List is recognized for her interpellation.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Maraming salamat muli, Mr. Speaker.

Iyong una ko pong katanungan, iyong una ko pong isyu, ito pong tungkol doon sa pag-veto ni Pangulong Duterte sa pag-grant sa PUP ng national polytechnic university status. He said he would not mind if the State University got shut down. Alam ninyo po, Mr. Speaker, more than 70,000 ang enrolment ng PUP at karamihan po ng mga mag-aaral dito sa PUP ay mga mahihirap o galing sa marginalized sector. Sinabi pa niya, sabi pa ni Pangulong Duterte, “Kayo diyan, iyang puwede nating sarahan iyang PUP. Wala akong pakialam sa kanila. Go ahead.”—he said in an interview with reporters on Tuesday. He then threatened the students who joined communist groups, blaming their parents for their negligence. He said he will order thousands of police and military to gun them down.

This justification—the wild, baseless, and highly speculative but dangerous allegation of recruitment into the NPA—did not appear, Mr. Speaker, in the veto message of the President, but in light of the circumstances, we take this as a real justification for his veto of the bill we passed which would have given PUP a well-deserved status as a national polytechnic university, to have fiscal autonomy and greater academic freedom, among others. Hindi ninyo po natatanong, Mr. Speaker, pero ang Kinatawan pong ito ay isa sa mga authors na nagsulong din nito dahil nakita ko naman kung gaano ang serbisyo ng PUP doon sa ating mga mag-aaral at, in terms naman ng mga performance and

achievement, hindi naman nahuhuli ang PUP. May survey sa JobStreet.com na sinasabi na nangunguna ang PUP graduates among the preferred para makakuha ng trabaho.

Mr. Speaker, may I know the comment of our Sponsor regarding this latest news about our SUC—the PUP.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, I share the sentiment of the distinguished Lady. Per my understanding, the bill was passed by the House and the Senate but was eventually, vetoed by the President. I do not think I am in a position to answer for the Office of the President as to why it was vetoed, but in the veto message, I believe that the reasons for the President vetoing it are self-explanatory but please, let me say this is something that is, probably, outside the scope of the budget concerns. I think the veto message itself explained the reason the Office of the President did not agree with the legislature.

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

Sa tingin po ng Kinatawang ito, sumobra ito, para sabihin sa isang state university na nagke-cater sa marginalized sector ng ating society. So, sinusupportahan po namin, ng Kinatawang ito, na muling magpasa ng batas para po muling igiit iyong pagiging national university ng PUP dahil well-deserved naman ito ng aming unibersidad.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, if the particular law was not vetoed and it was signed, I would join the honorable Lady in supporting and eventually funding that university. Unfortunately, the law did not take effect and again, as I said, Mr. Speaker, I share in the disappointment of the honorable Lady.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Second concern, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, is the budget of the Commission on Higher Education. I am very sad about the various cuts doon sa budget ng CHED, ngayon pa naman na mayroon po tayong free universal access to quality tertiary Education. So, malaki po rin iyon cuts dito at alam naman natin kung bakit ipinasa natin itong Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act? Ito ay dahil gusto nating mas malaki ang maka-access sa tertiary education. So, P7,153,748,000, ito po iyong na-cut doon sa budget ng Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Program. Mayroon din po ibang cut at itong subsidy for tuition fees ng mga medical students sa State Universities and Colleges ay talagang zero iyong budget dito para sa ating mga medical students, na ito pa man din sana iyong magbibigay sa atin ng pool of medical professionals na kailangan ng ating bayan.

So, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, ano po kaya ang puwede nating magawa para madagdagan or maibalik

ang mga cuts na ito dito sa budget ng Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Program at saka dito sa medical students.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, iyong magagawa po natin ngayon is to request our leadership in the House, and probably also in the Senate, to consider augmenting the budget of the CHED and restoring those cuts para po maibalik po iyong mga slots.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, aasahan ko po ang ating Sponsor na manguna para maibalik natin ang mga cuts na ito dahil significant ito na budget para doon sa ating mga SUCs at saka iyong sa scholarship natin para doon sa medical students?

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, Your Honor, we will strongly recommend that at magkasama po tayo na magre-recommend for that augmentation of the budget, Your Honor.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Ito ay nakalagay dito sa probisyon ng batas, sa RA 10931, “To provide adequate funding”—this is Section 2(a)—“and such other mechanisms to increase the participation rate among all socioeconomic classes in tertiary education.” Kahit mayroon nga tayong batas na ito, kung hindi naman ito popondohan ng sapat, maba-bale wala iyong ating effort dito sa Congress para doon sa access sa tertiary education, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. MATUGAS. Tama po iyan, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, the next point: Kanina ay binanggit po ng TESDA na mayroon silang budget para dito sa tinatawag na NTF-ELCAC kaugnay noong EO 70. So, pamilyar po ba rito ang ating Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. MATUGAS. Yes po, Your Honor, sinagot ko po iyan kanina sa budget defense ng TESDA, Your Honor.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Oo nga pala. Tama po. Ang tanong ko po kaugnay nito, ano naman po ang role o may role po ba ang CHED dito sa NTF-ELCAC?

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, kasama po ang CHED sa interagency task force ng Executive Order No. 70—member po sila—chaired by the President.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Opo, kasama. So, ano po iyong role ng CHED dito sa pagpapatupad ng NTF-ELCAC?

REP. MATUGAS. With regard to that provision, Your Honor, I think it is directed towards the TESDA but as far as the CHED is concerned, it is more on the scholarships being given to students, especially those in conflict areas, in impoverished areas.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Malinaw po iyong sagot ninyo sa akin, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, doon sa papel ng TESDA at nagkasundo po tayo kanina na magbibigay ng programa ang TESDA kaugnay dito sa NTF-ELCAC. Mr. Speaker, ang hindi po malinaw sa akin ay kung ano iyong gagawin ng CHED. Kung sinasabi ng CHED na sila ay involved, bilang ahensiya, dito sa NTF-ELCAC, at inaamin naman ng ating Sponsor na kabilang nga iyong CHED, gusto naming malaman kung ano ba iyong gagawin nila. Mr. Speaker, doon sa Committee on Public Order and Safety and Committee on Dangerous Drugs, joined in by the Committee on National Defense, sa hearing po sa Senate on Wednesday, August 7, may binanggit po tungkol dito iyong isang Executive Director ng CHED, si Ms. Jaro. Noong tinanong siya kaugnay sa role ng CHED dito sa ELCAC, at nabasa natin ito doon sa transcript ng hearing na nag-transpire sa Senado, sinabi niya: “Sir, we are in active participation of that task force which our President has created in order to prevent armed conflict. We are actively participating in that task force in order to determine how we can help in the prevention of armed conflict.” So, ito po iyong reply or answer ng ating kinatawan mula sa CHED kaugnay ng kanilang participation sa NTF-ELCAC.

Maaari po bang ipaliwanag sa atin, Mr. Speaker, ng ating Sponsor, kung ano iyong concrete na gagawin dito ng CHED?

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, ang mandato po ng CHED is to supervise the Higher Education Institutions. With this mandate, isa sa mga ginagawa nila is to disseminate information particularly on the programs of our government. So, ito pong EO 70, since they are a member of this task force, dini-disseminate po nila iyong tinatawag na “whole-of-nation concept” sa lahat ng HEIs na under sa supervision nila. So with that dissemination, the students will be aware kung ano po iyong ginagawa ng ating gobyerno to improve poverty alleviation through education.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Magbibigay po ako ng example, kung kabilang ito doon sa kanilang sinasabing mga information dissemination activities. Halimbawa, Mr. Speaker, iyong tinatawag na “Red October” ng AFP, na may na-tag na 18 schools nagre-recruit daw ng NPA. Sa ngayon ay active ang PNP at AFP na nagta-tag ng mga professors na nagbi-brainwash sa UP, PUP at ibang mga eskuwelahan pa. Alam natin na ang mga schools natin, ang SUCs ay nag-e-enjoy ng academic freedom,

and they are encouraging critical thinking sa ating mga kabataan. Yet, ang pagpasok ng AFP at PNP sa mga schools, maging public man o private under the CHED, ay nagdudulot ng takot sa ating mga estudyante at mga professors. May mga account din na pumupunta ang PNP kahit sa mga private schools and asking if there are recruiters ng NPA. May direktang nagpunta nga doon sa isang private school. Alam kaya ito ng CHED, na may nagtatanong ng direkta kung mayroong nire-recruit ng NPA?

So, may mga ganoon po, Mr. Speaker, na mga insidente na nalalaman natin at ang mga eskuwelahan siyempre ay under ng CHED. Ano po ang masasabi tungkol dito ng CHED, kasama ba ito doon sa pagpayag natin bilang miyembro o bilang tagapagsunod nitong NTF-ELCAC? Paano natin mapo-proteksiyunan ang kalayaan ng ating mga kabataan na mag-organisa pagkatapos magsalita noong kanilang gusting sabihin? Paano natin mapo-proteksiyunan ang karapatan ng ating mga guro sa kanilang academic freedom at mag-organisa din ng mga unyon? So, ano ang masasabi po dito, Mr. Speaker, ng ating Sponsor?

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, wala po iyon sa mandato ng CHED.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Tama, opo, talagang wala po iyon sa mandato ng CHED.

REP. MATUGAS. Wala po, at ang mandato ng CHED is to supervise and review the programs of higher education institutions as far as the activities within the schools, iyong nandoon po sa mga schools, and so, with CHED, nasa supervisory level po sila, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay, malinaw po, Mr. Speaker, ayon sa ating Sponsor, na wala sa mandato nila ang ganitong mga activity na nangyayari doon sa ating mga eskuwelahan. Bakit pinapayagan at bakit nangyayari ito, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, with regard to that, siguro nasa school po iyon at hindi po sa level ng CHED.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Sige, mamaya, in due time, siguro kay Congresswoman Elago, magbibigay siya ng mga examples. So, mayroon po bang nakalaang pondo para dito ang CHED?

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, per review po ng budget ng CHED, wala po with regard to that particular provision of EO 70. Nasa TESDA po iyong pondo, very specific.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, wala pong pondo ang CHED dito?

REP. MATUGAS. Wala po, Your Honor.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay, that is good to hear.

Next topic po, Mr. Speaker, dito ay palalawigin ko lang iyong sinabi ng ating kasamahan sa Minority, ni Congressman Teves. Ito ay nasabi ko na rin sa ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor, na kami po sa ACT TEACHERS Party-List ay tagapagtaguyod po kami talaga ng kapakanan ng mga kaguruan hindi lang po sa basic education, private o public, pati na rin sa mga SUCs na iyan.

Mayroon pong NBC 461, na na-veto po ni Pangulong Duterte, na humihingi lang po, simple lang, ng joint circular na manggagaling po sa CHED at saka ng DBM which is, at nagawa naman po, Joint Circular No. 1, August 30, 2019, at nakalagay dito iyong ginawa po ng CHED. Nakalagay din po dito sa pag-veto ni Presidente Duterte na may nakalaan na po na pondo, Mr. Speaker, dahil inaprubahan natin sa budget ng 2019 iyong P1.41 billion. Tama po ba? Ang hinihingi po talaga to cover iyong kailangan nating budget para sa NBC 461 ay P2.91 billion pero ang naaprubahan lang po para sa 2019 budget ay halos kalahati. Mukhang na-assure naman tayo ng DBM na iyong kalahati ay ibibigay sa 2020. So, ang tanong ko lang po, kailan ito mai-implement? Nakalagay po dito sa veto na dapat ay July 1. Ngayon, doon sa ginawang joint circular ay mayroong two months na dapat i-fulfill iyong mga kinakailangang requirements para maipatupad ito.

Ngayon po, Mr. Speaker, September na—so, September, October, November, December—alam ninyo ang babayaran na ito sa mga kaawa-awa nating mga teachers sa SUCs ay 2013 pa past due, for 2013 to 2017. Ito iyong tinatawag nating Cycle No. 7 at ngayon po, 2016 to 2019, Cycle No. 8 na sana iyan. Ito ay napakatagal na at ilang taon din natin ito talagang iginiit sa Kongreso na mapondohan. Ang issue lang naman po dito—at naitanong ko na rin ito sa ating CHED—ay doon sa mga requirements kaugnay nito. Ang sabi ay parang bumalik tayo sa zero sa pagpo-points kasi natapos na iyong mga ginawang evaluation sa mga teachers natin. So, ang tanong ko lang po, Mr. Speaker, kailan ito talagang maipatutupad dahil September na at nag-lapse na po iyong 60 days na kailangan para maipatupad ito, Mr. Speaker?

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, with regard to your first comment, iyong tungkol sa mga requirements, hindi po bumalik sa zero at nire-review lang po ng CHED. Then, CHED will talk first or have a meeting with the Civil Service Commission and the DBM. In fact, they are willing to move up the schedule for its implementation and once it is legal, kapag nag-agree

ang tatlong agency—the CHED, DBM and CSC, sabihin nating mag-a-agree sila sa January, then it will be implemented this coming January.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, thank you. Matagal na po ito, parang ang problema po yata natin ay ang CHED at ang CSC, pero kailangang ma-expedite iyong pagpapatupad nitong NBC 461. Ano po iyong time frame natin, aabutin pa ba tayo ng January 2020 or next week na? Ano po ang time frame natin, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor?

REP. MATUGAS. Iyong timeline, ang nakasaad po dito is 60 days.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Natapos na po iyong 60 days kasi hindi ba mula ito noong July 1?

REP. MATUGAS. Hindi po kasi itong Joint Circular was signed on August 1 at naka-indicate po dito, August 30—hindi pala, August 1 and so, 60 days from August 30 po, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, ini-expect po natin sa November.

REP. MATUGAS. Yes.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay. Mr. Speaker, ang gusto ko na lang po ay mabigyan tayo ng report o update ng ating Kagawaran, through our Sponsor, sa development ng implementation ng NBC 461 dahil talagang due na ito sa ating mga teachers. Huwag na nating patagalin iyong kanilang agony.

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will submit what you required.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mr. Speaker, last na topic na po ito kaugnay noong pagpapatupad natin ulit sa Free Universal Quality Tertiary Education Program, as regards sa IRR noong ating RA 10931. So, malinaw po sa batas, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, iyong tungkol doon sa paglilibre natin ng tuition and other school fees, at iba pang bayarin na nasa RA 10931, pero noong lumabas po iyong IRR, nag-enumerate sa IRR ng mga fees na nagbigay ng kaguluhan or nagkaroon ng confusion sa pagpapatupad ng SUCs ng batas na ito. Tama po ba na ang CHED ang nagdagdag ng mga fees dito sa IRR natin?

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, hindi po dinagdagan iyong IRR because nasa batas o mother law po iyong enumeration ng 13 miscellaneous fees. The CHED cannot increase what had been enumerated in the mother law, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Parang wala akong nakita kasi dito sa Section 4, Mr. Speaker, on “Free Higher Education in SUCs and LUCs. - All Filipino students who are either currently enrolled at the time of the effectivity of this Act, or shall enroll at any time... shall be exempt from paying tuition and other school fees for the units they enrolled in.”

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the CHED is willing to submit a copy of the IRR.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Mayroon po ako, Mr. Speaker, noong IRR. So, idinagdag nga po dito sa IRR iyong mga na-identify na mga fees like iyong library fees, computer fees, laboratory fees. Tama po ba?

Ito po iyong pinakahuli, puwede pa po ba, Mr. Sponsor, na tanggalin natin iyong paragraph (ww) sa Section 3, Rule I, ng IRR? Or issue an amendatory order retracting the CHED’s restriction on the kinds of fees that can be charged by the SUCs and LUCs to the budget allocation. Tanggalin iyong inilagay natin sa IRR, kasi malinaw naman iyong batas na “free tuition and other fees.” Malinaw na iyon doon sa batas natin pero nilagyan natin ng enumeration.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, may I ask for one-minute suspension of session?

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

It was 8:55 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 8:56 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The good Sponsor is recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, upon comparing the IRR and the law, RA 10931, it seems that kung ano po iyong naka-enumerate sa law, sa batas, iyon po rin iyong naka-enumerate sa IRR, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker. So, wala pong dinagdag ang CHED doon sa list of miscellaneous fees, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). I beg to disagree, Mr. Speaker, dahil malinaw po dito sa Section 4 na kapag sinabi nating free tuition and other fees, malinaw ang nakalagay sa batas pero may na-enumerate doon sa IRR, may items 1 to 14 iyong nilagay. Mr. Speaker, hindi puwedeng manaig ang IRR doon sa batas kasi

alam na alam po natin ito dahil tayo po ay actively na nag-participate dito sa paggawa ng batas na ito. Ang ACT TEACHERS po ay kasama po sa bicam at talagang inayos po natin na talagang wala na dapat na mga ganito kasi nakakapagpalito iyan sa pagpapatupad ng batas.

Kaya nga po nagkaroon ng kalituhan, halimbawa po sa PUP, mayroon pong ilang enumeration ng fees na wala naman dito, pero ano lang po iyon, misunderstanding or nagkaroon ng error. Nagkakaroon kasi ng interpretation, Mr. Speaker, so, ang motion po ng Kinatawan na ito ay tanggalin sa IRR itong item “(ww)” na ito na nag-enumerate noong mga fees sa IRR.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, may I be allowed to read Section 3 of RA10931, Section 3, letter (h)?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Please proceed.

REP. MATUGAS. Under Section 3, letter (h) says:

(h) *Other school fees* refers to fees charged by HEIs and technical-vocational institutions which cover other necessary costs supportive of instructions, specifically the following: library fees, computer fees, laboratory fees, school ID fees, athletic fees, admission fees, development fees, guidance fees, handbook fees, entrance fees, registration fees, medical and dental fees, cultural fees, and other similar or related fees.

So, actually, it is 14 items, still the same in the IRR, 14 other school fees as enumerated in the law, RA 10931, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). I agree, nandidito po, pero iyon po ay definition lang ng “other fees” kaya nakakapagpalito ang mga iyan dito.

Inilagay dito po sa letter (h) ng Section 3 iyong definition po ng “other fees” pero malinaw po doon sa kasunod na Section 4 na free tuition and other fees, kaya hindi puwedeng magdagdag ng anumang maisipan ng SUC na fees.

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, we share your sentiment but upon looking at the IRR and the law, wala po talagang idinagdag.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). May I have a minute of suspension, Mr. Speaker.

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

It was 9:00 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 9:02 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The honorable Sponsor is recognized.

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, Your Honor, I have with me a memorandum from the Office of the Chairperson of CHED. The subject matter of the memorandum is the prohibition on the collection of any mandatory fee, amount or financial exaction of whatever nature or form by State Universities and Colleges. The CHED recognized thereat local universities and colleges other than those expressly stipulated in Section 3, letter (h), R.A. No. 10931, the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act of 2007.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). Okay, Mr. Speaker, malinaw na malinaw po na sa pagpapatupad noong ating batas tungkol sa Universal Quality Tertiary Education ay walang kokolektahin ang anumang SUCs na tuition fee or other miscellaneous fees sa ating mga estudyante.

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, po, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor.

REP. CASTRO (F.L.). So, that ends my interpellation, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, Mr. Sponsor.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, next to interpellate, I move that we recognize Hon. Sarah Jane I. Elago of the KABATAAN Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Hon. Sarah Elago of the KABATAAN Party-List is recognized for her interpellation of the Sponsors for the budgets of the Commission on Higher Education and other State Universities.

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat at magandang gabi, Mr. Speaker, mga kagalang-galang na mga kapwa Mambabatas, Mr. Sponsor at higit sa lahat, sa CHED at SUCs families. Bago ang lahat, Mr. Speaker, nais ko pong sabihin na mas mabuti kung nandito po ang mga SUCs para mapakinggan rin nila ang mga paglilinaw ng mga kabataan at iskolar ng bayan tungkol sa mga polisiya

ng CHED at SUCs. Mr. Speaker, dahil nagpaiwan tayo ng ilang SUCs, nagmukha pong ayaw natin na agad maaprubahan ang mga pondo ng lahat ng SUCs. Maski po ako ay naguluhan at nababahala na ganito pala ang naging epekto nito. Gusto nating linawin na wala po tayong pinapa-defer na SUC, all-out support po tayo sa mga SUCs, hindi po ba, Mr. Speaker, sa UP naming mahal, sa sintang paaralan na PUP, at ang PhilSCA dear, our alma mater dear. Nais pa nga nating malaman kung paano pa mapapalaki ang pondo ng UP para sa mga dormitoryo, ang pondo ng PUP para sa dagdag facilities at renovation ng kanilang mga buildings sa main campus, at kung paano pa makakapagdagdag ng mga laboratoryo sa PhilSCA, at ganoon din sa ibang SUCs.

Sa katunayan, ngayong araw lamang, Mr. Speaker, ang Representasyon na ito at 10 ng halos 80 na kapwa nating mga Mambabatas ay kasama sa mga nagtutulak ng panukalang House Resolution No. 325. Mr. Speaker, it is a Resolution strongly urging the House Committee on Appropriations to restore cuts in the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses of State Universities and Colleges, and to study options to augment funding for Personnel Services and Capital Outlays. Iyan po ang tugon ng Kapulungan na ito, lalong-lalo na bagamat may kaunting increase sa kabuuang pondo ng mga SUCs ay 53 naman po dito ang may cut sa kanilang overall budget, samantalang 49 ng mga SUCs ang may kaltas sa kanilang Capital Outlays at 9 naman sa mga ito ang zero o wala pong pondo para sa Capital Outlays para sa taong 2020. Ganoon din, Mr. Speaker, pagdating naman sa Personnel Services, mayroon tayong 90 out of our 111 SUCs na may kaltas, kaya nababahala kami kung ano ba iyong mga implikasyon ng mga kaltas sa pondo na ito sa ating State Universities and Colleges.

Mr. Speaker, nabanggit na naman ang tungkol sa patuloy na koleksiyon ng ibat-ibang bayarin sa mga SUCs. Nais ko ring magbigay alam sa CHED na tayo po ay may hawak dito ng isang listahan ng 141 other school fees na kinokolekta, na ang paliwanag po sa atin ng CHED ay ito po ay nag-a-apply lamang sa Polytechnic University of the Philippines. Kaya nga po nais nating muling linawin sa CHED ang kanilang patakaran pagdating sa pangongolekta sa mga eskuwelahan dahil po sa ang ating naipasa na batas, ang R.A. No. 10931 noong Seventeenth Congress, ay ipinagbabawal na ho ang mangolekta ng tuition at other school fees mula sa lahat ng mga qualified na mga estudyante, at ang mga magbabayad lamang ho ay iyong mga voluntary na mga mag-o-opt out o kaya naman ay iyong gagawa ng donasyon para po sa papasukan nila na state university at college. Nagkalituhan po tayo noong naglabas ng Implementing Rules and Regulations ang CHED na nagsasabi na 13 lamang ang fees na covered ng batas na iyon.

Mr. Speaker, libre ba nating maipagmamalaki ang public education, maipagmamalaki ba natin na libre ang ibinigay natin sa mga iskolar ng bayan kung

mayroon pa rin tayong mga kinokolekta na nasa 141 na other school fees? Kaya po hinahamon po natin ang CHED na kung mayroon pala silang memorandum na nagre-reiterate na noong pagbabawal ng mga fees ay dapat na pong ibasura ang listahan na ito ng 141 fees dahil iyan po ay pretext o prelude to the collection of more redundant and dubious other school fees in State Universities and Colleges.

For instance, Mr. Speaker, mayroon pong kinokolekta na garbage disposal fee na P50 mula sa ating mga iskolar ng bayan sa isang SUC. Nakausap ko po kanina ang Presidente ng SUC na ito at siya naman po ay tumanggap doon sa hamon natin na ibasura ang fee na ito kasi dapat kasama na po iyong garbage disposal fee sa kanilang MOOE. Mr. Speaker, isang SUC pa lang iyon, paano pa po iyong higit na isang daan pa na SUC? Ngayon po ay tanungin natin ang CHED kung ano po ang kanilang polisiya pagdating sa koleksiyon ng other school fees? Ito po iyong mga sinasabing “necessary costs sa instruction” ng ating mga SUCs, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, with due respect, sinagot ko na po iyong issue regarding the school fees. With regard to your statement about the 141 other school fees being collected by a particular SUC, puwede pong mag-complain iyong mga estudyante sa Kagawaran at CHED and they are willing to investigate. May memorandum na po kasi na na-issue prohibiting the collection of fees other than those listed in the law and the IRR, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, ang CHED po ang Chair ng board na naglabas ng listahan na ito. Ito po ay inilabas ng UniFAST Board—ang Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education Board kung saan ang CHED po ang Chair. So, napakarami po nito at maski po energy fee ay pinapayagan na nilang kolektahin. Mr. Speaker, hindi ba iyong energy fee ay part po iyan ng Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses na pinapasok na po natin sa mga SUCs, so, nagkabiglaan po ngayon sa SUCs natin. Akala namin libre pero mayroon pa pala tayong energy fee na babayaran on top of other burdensome other school fees.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, with due respect to our distinguished interpellator, if my memory serves me right, during the briefing, you asked that question and it was answered by the CHED panel na iyong nangyari po ay, with this digital age now, na-splice po iyong listahan. Pinapalabas na CHED ang nag-issue when, in fact, wala po silang na-issue na ganoong list of school fees and even if ipalabas iyan, the CHED will deny it categorically and they are willing to investigate that matter, Your Honor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, maganda po, may logo pa po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). May I request the Lady, the interpellator, na iyong mga naitanong na natin sa pre-briefing ay huwag na nating tanungin ngayon dahil nasagot naman na iyan doon sa pre-plenary briefing.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, tayo po bilang Representasyon ng mga KABATAAN at iskolar ng bayan, ay siyempre po bumalik sa ating mga constituents para magbigay linaw hinggil dito, at sinabi nga po nila na ito iyong mga fees na kinokolekta sa kanila, kaya nga kung mayroon palang memorandum ang CHED tungkol doon sa pagbabawal ng mga other school fees, baka maaari na mag-file o maglabas uli tayo ng mas malakas na memorandum na malinaw na ipinagbabawal po ang koleksiyon ng tuition at other school fees sa mga State Universities and Colleges.

Bukod diyan, Mr. Speaker, dapat po nating mareview iyong Implementing Rules and Regulations na inilabas na kaugnay noong implementation ng free public education kasi diyan po ay hindi na po tayo nabigyan ng pagkakataon para iyong mga nakalagay diyan na mga probisyon ay matiyak na iyan ay nandoon sa espiritu ng batas. Ang espiritu ng batas, Mr. Speaker, ay free public higher education. Wala pong libre kung mayroon ka pa ring mga binabayaran na tuition at other school fees. Naiintindihan po natin iyong tungkol sa educational expenses, uniforms, et cetera at iyan po ay ibang usapin, pero malinaw po na sa tuition and other school fees, hindi po puwedeng mangolekta ka diyan ng garbage fee, hindi po puwedeng mangolekta ka ng energy fee, hindi po puwedeng mangolekta ka ng deposit fee or admission fee. So, Mr. Speaker, malinaw po dapat na sa pagtutulak ng free public education, there should be no collection ng tuition and other school fees. Can we get the commitment of the CHED through the distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, actually, nagsulat na po ang CHED to PUP na mag-explain sila noong ginawa nila and until now, wala pa pong sagot itong PUP doon sa ginawa nilang 141 different kinds of fees when they are committed to follow the law. The CHED is committed to follow the law. In fact, that is why there is a memorandum regarding the prohibition of other fees.

REP. ELAGO. All right. So, that is, no collection of tuition and other school fees? I would just like to get the affirmation of the distinguished Sponsor.

REP. MATUGAS. What is in the law are those fees that are enumerated, those are the legal fees that a school, that a particular SUC can collect. Other than that, wala na.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, noong nag-uusap po kami sa bicam, it is almost impossible to list all the school fees necessary to support the cost of instruction doon po sa mismong batas natin. So, we agreed and we listed down the commonly collected other school fees necessary to support the cost of instruction and we added there, pagkatapos po noong 13, other similar or related fees, again, which are necessary to support the costs of instruction.

So, malinaw po, iyong mga gawa-gawang fees na tawag po diyan, dapat po hindi na natin pinapayagan kasi iyan po ay talagang hindi lang nakakagulo, kundi natatalo nito po iyong purpose ng batas na iyong Kapulungan po na ito ang nagpasa. Kaya, again, may dalawa po: no collection of tuition and other school fees; at pangalawa, panahon na po, kung may mga ganito bang listahan ng mga 141 fees, para hindi lang natin iimbestigahan kundi ibabasura natin at i-review muna natin iyong Implementing Rules and Regulations na nilabas po ng UniFAST Board.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, nag-agree po ako doon sa punto mo. Iyon po ang sinusunod talaga ng CHED, sinusunod talaga nila iyong batas.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). To the good Sponsor, Mr. Sponsor, kapag naman ibinasura ninyo iyong sinasabi niya, huwag na naman kayo maniningil ng garbage fee, ha?

Honorable Elago, you may proceed.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, can I speak once again, can I?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Okay.

REP. ELAGO. Sige po.

REP. DAZA. With the indulgence of the Lady from KABATAAN Party-List, we had extensive discussions on this particular concern, and this Representation supports many of the findings of the distinguished Lady. Please allow me to share and to assure the Representative from the KABATAAN Party-List that inherent in the powers of the legislature, we have the power of oversight and investigation. So, if there are any issues on the interpretation of the law, like in this particular case, in the IRR that were issued, as a Sponsor of the State Universities and Colleges budget, I would like to give my assurance that I will support and assist the Lady from the KABATAAN Party-List to shed light on this through more dialogues and maybe, even further hearings in the Committee on Higher Education to revisit not just the IRR and maybe even the law itself, because I also feel the same way that in some cases and in fact, just earlier, and I supported the contention of

the Lady, that in one particular university, there was a garbage fee being charged to all the students, and I agree with her that in that particular case, that should be charged to the MOOE.

Having said that, I would like to give the Lady and the other Members of the House assurance that we should exercise our right of oversight, and in this particular case, that is the review of the IRR, and we have been assured by the CHED that they will cooperate with us. Should there be any errors in interpretation of the law, I think all the Members will be one with the Representative from KABATAAN Party-List in supporting the changes in the IRR.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, we welcome the assurance from the distinguished Sponsor and we would want this commitment to be written on paper. When can we expect that written commitment from the Commission, Mr. Speaker?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, it could be as simple as a written request from Your Honor. Being a member also of the Committee on Higher Education, I will personally see to it that we schedule the necessary hearing or meeting with the CHED to address her concerns because personally, I also have an interest in this particular issue.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, iyong CHED din po ay dapat maglabas ng kanilang commitment that there will be no collection of tuition and other school fees pending the review of the IRR. Kailan po natin ito maaasahan mula sa Commission on Higher Education, Mr. Speaker?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, after the work on the budget, I assure the distinguished Lady that the CHED and this Representation, together with other Members who are interested, will sit down with the CHED, review the IRR and address those particular issues.

REP. ELAGO. So, Mr. Speaker, within the month kasi po iyon din ang target natin bago tayo magsimula.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, we will be on a break by October 5. I cannot assure you because I, personally, will be away on October 5, but if the Lady will give us some flexibility, maybe within the month or sometime in October, if that is acceptable to the distinguished Lady from KABATAAN Party-List.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, first week of October is a good for this Representation.

REP. DAZA. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

REP. ELAGO. Kailangan po iyan bago magsimula ang susunod na termino sa ating mga state universities and colleges.

Now, let me go to my next set of concerns, Mr. Speaker. Tungkol po sa residence halls sa UP, maganda po iyong pagbibigay ng importansiya ng UP sa ating mga dormitoryo. The UP treats our residence halls with high regard so as to call them as living laboratories on campus, where students are able to integrate and interplay between academic and non-academic learning experiences. Ngayong taon po ay may renovation sa tatlong pinakamalalaking residence halls sa UP Diliman. Ang concern po ng ating mga iskolar ng bayan, sa higit isang libo na apektado ng renovation—we welcome naman po ang renovation—pero ang plano po hinggil sa mga madi-displace nating mga residente, mukhang dito po kailangan ng atensiyon. Kumusta na po iyong estado ng ating residence halls at natugunan na ba iyong kanilang mga panawagan hinggil sa suporta sa kanilang paninirahan sa loob ng unibersidad?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, to clarify, is the Lady referring to the renovation of the dormitories?

REP. ELAGO. Yes, Mr. Speaker, mayroon po tayong na-displace na mga residente, about a thousand residents. Nagsabi po ang UP na sila ay magbibigay ng suporta dahil nga mahalaga sa kanila hindi lang ang mga dorms pero maski ang mga residente. Kumusta na po ba ang mga residente natin, ang mga dormers, kasi magpasa-hanggang ngayon po ay hiram na hiram silang maghanap ng kanilang lilipatan.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, many of the students in the community in UP were complaining about the condition of these dormitories. Luckily, the university received funding in the 2019 GAA for the renovation and in fact, funding for a new dormitory building, but because of the Cash-Based System that was instituted starting 2019, the university gave advance notice to the students that the renovation will start at the expiration of their one-year lease to comply with the DBM Cash-Based System requirements, and to also comply with the request of many students who are complaining about their condition. The project to renovate and to construct the new dormitories was immediately started and in fact, the project is now ongoing and should be completed by year end.

We do sympathize with the students who were displaced, but they were given advance notice. I appreciate the Lady for bringing this up because no less than the university president had said that once the dormitories are completed, the returning students who are interested will be given priority in the newly-renovated dormitories.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, pagdating sa ating newly-renovated dormitories, gusto rin po nating makakuha ng commitment mula sa ating UP president na hindi magtataas ang rental fee kapag matapos ang renovation kasi iyan po ang kinakatakot ng ating mga residente.

Marami po diyan, iyong mga talagang ina-accept sa ating dorms, sila po iyong mga wala pong kakahayan o kulang po ang kakayahan na makapagbayad po doon sa mga boarding houses or condominiums around the area na medyo matataas na rin po talaga ang rent. So, iyong mga residence halls po within the campus, iyan po talaga ang pinakamura kasi subsidized ng UP iyong binabayaran ng kada estudyante. Kaya po, ano, wala pong tataas na rent ng ating mga dormers, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, the position of the University, given the financial constraints, is that it will assure this, provided that there will be additional funding to their MOOE because there are increases in all sources of expenses like power, cleaning, maintenance. That is a financial decision that could be made later, unless we can provide additional funding for their MOOE.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, tayo po ang nagpondo para doon sa renovation at siyempre, gusto naman natin ng mas magandang facilities doon sa dormitories, ano po, pero ang ibig sabihin pala nito ay mas mataas din po ang kokolektahin mula doon sa mga estudyante. Bakit hindi na lang po—before naman ay ginagamit na rin natin iyong pondo na binabayaran nila, ano? Break even po, parang ganoon noong panahon ko as part of the Student Council. So, bakit po kailangan pa nating parang mag-warn na kapag walang ibibigay na dagdag na pondo, hindi rin natin ma-a-assure na walang pagtataas?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, to properly address the concern of my colleague, in the past, many of the students in the community had complained about the conditions of the housing units and in fact, in prior years, the university had attempted to increase the rates but the students would complain and say, “Ang pangit naman, kailangang ma-renovate. Huwag na ninyong taasan kasi hindi pa maganda.” Ngayon po ay pinaganda na iyong mga dormitories, gusto po ng university na mag-taas ng kahit kaunti dahil mas magaganda na ito ngayon. Having said that, should the House and the Committee find ways to augment the MOOE fund of the university, I think no less than the President has said that they will not increase the rates.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, kung kakausapin po ninyo ang mga dormers na na-displace, na hanggang

ngayon po ay nakikipagsiksikan sa mga boarding houses ng mga kakilala at classmates nila, at masaya na po sila, mayroon na silang bubong na masisilungan. Hindi nila kailangan gumastos dahil lalakaran na lang nila, nanggagaling po sila doon o nandoon lang sila sa residence halls within UP. Kung nandoon ka sa loob mismo ng campus, lalakaran mo na lang lahat ang pagpunta sa mga buildings. Iyong mga pinakamahihirap ho natin na mga iskolar ng bayan, diyan po talaga ang takbuhan nila.

Kaya, again, Mr. Speaker, hinihiling po natin sa ating university president, na siya pong presidente na naglagay sa UP sa top 500 ng mga universities sa buong mundo, na itong mga dormitoryo, they are an integral part, iyong housing for university students of the university community to support not only the indigent, but also those na underprivileged po talaga ang mga families, na nakapasa po sa ating national university. Again, Mr. Speaker, iyong commitment po ng ating UP president na huwag naman natin palakihan pa iyong pangamba ng mga iskolar ng bayan na tayo po, sa ating pag-i-improve ng facilities, na hindi rin po tayo magtataas ng rent sa ating residence halls.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, for someone who also lived in the dorms in his college days, I fully understand the sentiments of the Lady from KABATAAN Party-List. The university has committed that, if they are truly poor, the rates will be discounted, and I am happy to share that with the Members of the House.

REP. ELAGO. Huwag po sana nating itrato bilang income-generating activity ang ating mga dormitoryo dahil iyan po ay serbisyo nga para doon sa mga pinakamahihirap natin na mga estudyante. Kaya po, again, iyong mga serbisyo po katulad ng pabahay, pagkain at health care, hindi po dapat natin iyan tinatrato bilang money-making ventures for our SUCs. Tatal, napakarami pa po nating puwedeng i-explore na mga pamamaraan to generate more resources for the university, given the deep well of talents it has produced in its more than 100 years of history, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. DAZA. We appreciate the concern para po doon sa mga mahihirap na mga estudyante pero kung titingnan po natin sa financial statements, ang totoo po diyan, iyong kulang talaga, ito ang sinisingil. In fact, subsidized talaga iyong housing at kulang pa iyon para sa lahat ng overhead expenses. Ang totoo pa diyan hindi po iyan revenue-generation for the university. Talagang ang rate po niyan, for example, ay P300 per month. Kung iko-compare po natin iyan doon sa malalapit sa UP, wala po tayong makukuhang kuwanto na ang upa ay P300 per month dahil subsidized po iyan. Ang issue na lang is, to what extent will we subsidize, and that is really the role

partly of the legislature on how we can work with the executive branch in funding the university.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, it had been discussed extensively sa budget briefing na lahat ng SUCs ay medyo kulang-kulang po ang pondo. Despite that, kahit po kulang dahil nabawasan ang pondo ng SUCs po natin, they are still doing their best to fulfill the mandate of providing access to quality education, especially for the needy and the poor.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, ganito na lang po. After renovation, hindi po tayo magtataas. Kung mayroon man po tayong pagtataas sa fees na kokolektahin from our dormers, dapat po tayong magkaroon ng konsultahan sa kanila kasi the best po na makakapagbigay ng mga inputs on this matter are the dormers themselves.

So, would that be agreeable, Mr. Sponsor, Mr. Speaker?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, we support the request for consultation, and this Representation believes that is the important role of the Members of the House. We appreciate the passionate plea and concern of the distinguished Lady from KABATAAN Party-List.

REP. ELAGO. Salamat po, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

Ang sunod po ay iyong sa Polytechnic University of the Philippines. Tungkol naman po sa PUP budget. magkano po ang inyong original proposed budget sa DBM? Ang nakuha po nila sa GAB 1 ay nasa P170 million, pero ang PUP ang pinakamalaki nating SUC sa buong bansa with 80,000 students. Iyan po ay times four ng buong UP System kaya nababahala po tayo doon sa liit ng kanyang nakukuhang pondo kumpara sa dami ng mga iskolar ng bayan na umaasa na makapag-aral at makapagtapos mula sa sintang paaralan na PUP.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, sa rough estimate, from what the PUP had requested and what eventually was included in the National Expenditure Program, there was a reduction of 48 percent.

REP. ELAGO. Iyan din po ang kalagayan ng iba nating SUCs kaya kung made-delay pa iyong kanilang inaasahang income mula sa tuition and other school fees na subsidized ng GAA mula sa RA 10931, mas mahihirapan po iyong administrasyon ng PUP. Ano po ang naging challenges sa Polytechnic University of the Philippines pagdating sa pagpapatupad ng RA 10931? Paano po natin natitiyak na agaran din na dumarating ang pondo sa PUP at hindi po katulad ng nangyari noon, as reported to this Representation, sa UP Manila at sa UP Visayas, na talagang ilang buwan na na-delay ang pagkuha po nila ng pondo na para doon sa tuition and other school fees?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, as correctly pointed out, there were delays in the reimbursement mechanism for the tuition and other school fees because of the mismatch of the academic year and the fiscal year. This contributed to the problem of delayed collection.

First, the CHED, in its original mandate, is really a policy-making regulatory commission, and because of the advent of the Free Tuition Law, they were burdened by the additional administrative work, as correctly pointed out, which caused some delays in the reimbursement. For year 2020, most of the universities, if not all, will be changing their academic year to that which will be conducive to the administrative work of the CHED. Second, I think the CHED, in fact, has been allowed to get a private entity and outsource some of its administrative work to the same organization that helps the DepEd in its voucher system. So, we believe that this year and by next year, there will be a better performance in terms of reimbursements or income for the universities.

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker, at ang Representasyong ito ay nagnanais din po na makipagtulungan sa UniFAST Board para talaga maging fast iyong reimbursement ng tuition and other school fees sa ating SUCs, para hindi ito makaapekto sa ating mga nonteaching personnel, lalong-lalo na sa aming constituents, Mr. Speaker, ang mga student councils and governments at mga campus press.

Maaari po ba tayong makapagpagawa din ng espesyal na proseso para naman po iyong mga nakaasa doon sa mga previous na kinokolekta nilang fees para sa mga student councils at campus press at hindi na sila mahihirapan pagdating sa conduct ng kanilang activities dahil kailangan pa po nilang hintayin ang end of term bago sila magkaroon ng pondo para sa projects and activities nila?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, those concerns are internal to each respective SUC because, as you know, our State Universities and Colleges are autonomous with their own respective Boards of Regents. We will just assist in the concern to fast-track releases of, you know, financial support for the organizations and we will discuss that with the PASUC to find ways to help address that concern.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, isa lamang po iyong kahilingan o iyong karaingan ng ating mga student councils and campus press at iyon ay ang suportahan ng CHED, PASUC at ng buong UniFAST Board ang fiscal autonomy ng ating mga student councils at campus press. Iyan po ay nakalagay sa kanya-kanyang mga konstitusyon na binuo po ng mga estudyante sa case ng mga student government, at kung sa mga campus press naman ay mayroon po silang kanya-kanyang

mga editorial boards. Lahat po iyan, dahil ito ay mga institusyon na isinulong ng mga estudyante, mga estudyante rin po mismo ang nagbuo ng resolusyon na ito na tumindig para sa kanilang fiscal autonomy sa loob po ng mga universities and colleges natin.

So, may we get that commitment from the CHED, distinguished Sponsor, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DAZA. To the extent allowed by law, Mr. Speaker, the CHED is willing to support that, but per my understanding, Mr. Speaker, those particular concerns raised by the Lady is on the operations/management/policies of each respective state university and college, and governed by their Board of Regents. To the extent that these issues can be raised in the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges, I am assuring the Lady that, provided she gives enough information and details, I personally will bring them up to both CHED and the PASUC.

REP. ELAGO. Salamat po.

Sa ibang mga issue, Mr. Speaker, what is CHED's current policy on the exception of the Sangguniang Kabataan officials, all elected and appointed members, from taking the NSTP in accordance with the SK Reform Act. I have here a joint memorandum circular from the CHED and the National Youth Commission and it says here na exempted lang po sa CWTS 2 ang mga SK officials natin pero hindi sa lahat ng mga NSTP-CWTS subjects nila.

So, bakit po ganon, Mr. Speaker?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, May I be recognized?

Mr. Speaker, may I ask for a one-minute suspension of the session?

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

It was 9:43 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 9:44 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

REP. MATUGAS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With regard to your query, Your Honor, sa mga Sangguniang Kabataan, required po silang sa NSTP 1 kasi common module, but with regard to NSTP 2, exempted sila. Mayroon na pong CMO na inilabas ang CHED tungkol dito.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, mauunahan na po ng batas na ito iyong hinggil sa ating NSTP Law dahil iyong batas naman po natin pagdating sa SK Reform ay nagre-require po ng mandatory training para sa ating mga Sangguniang Kabataan officials, ano po. Kaya po iyong mismong laman ng CWTS 1, marami po, if not all, ay nandoon na rin po sa loob ng mandatory training ng ating mga SK officials, at malinaw po dito na sabi po sa ating batas, "be exempt from taking the National Service Training Program-CWTS subjects." So, lahat po ng mga subjects na may kinalaman or covered ng Civic Welfare Training Service, kaya bakit po ito nalagay doon sa SK Reform Act? Para din mabigyan pa ng dagdag na oras iyong mga estudyante na makapagsilbi doon sa kanilang mga barangay at makapag-attend doon sa mga proyekto nila bilang mga nahalal o mga appointed na lingkod bayan?

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, if papayagan ninyo po, magbibigay po iyong CHED ng copy ng Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1, series of 2019, and it is a memorandum between the CHED and the National Youth Commission on the guidelines for the exemption of SK officials from taking NSTP-CWTS in accordance with Section 16, No. 2 of RA 10742.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, may kopya rin po ako dito. Ang sa akin lang po, baka po puwede nating i-review, pagkatapos ay i-consider po natin iyong mga komento at position paper mula sa ating mga Sangguniang Kabataan na nagsasabi po na sa kanila pong mandatory training, na kasama na rin ito, na mayroon pa silang continuing training, kaya malaking tulong sa kanila kung iyong isa sa mga pribilehiyo na sang-ayon sa batas ay maibibigay po sa kanila, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, payag po ang CHED na i-review po iyong joint memorandum circular na iyon.

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

Now, going to my last set of questions po pero bago po pala tayo umalis dito, nais ko lang pong tanungin iyong Philippine State College of Aeronautics budget, na nag-alala po kami doon sa kanilang 24 percent na cut sa Personnel Services, lalong-lalo na dahil naglabas po ang mga airlines sa buong mundo, tulad ng Qantas, ng statement na, "We would be needing about 7,000 new pilots for the next three or five years."

Bakit hindi po natin i-grab ang opportunity na ito, tatal, sa Pilipinas po, ang pride natin ay mayroon tayong isang state college ng aeronautics. Bakit po nakakaranas pa ang ating natatangi na state college para sa aeronautics ng ganitong kalalaki na mga cuts? Maaari po bang maipaliwanag ang 24 percent decrease

na ito at idagdag na rin po, para po marinig ng ating mga kasamahan dito sa Kongreso, kung ano pa po iyong mga kinakailangan natin pagdating sa Capital Outlays para ma-improve ang mga facilities ng Philippine State College of Aeronautics.

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, yes, we confirm that their budget was cut for both PS and MOOE.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, nais ko na lang pong humingi ng paliwanag sa PhilSCA tungkol doon sa 24 percent cut sa Personnel Services. Nais ko rin pong malaman, pagdating sa Capital Outlays—hindi po biro ang mag-train ng mga piloto at aeronautical engineers—ano ba po iyong mga kinakailangan sa Capital Outlays natin na hindi po naibigay o hindi po kasama pa doon sa ating GAB I o nakabilang doon sa NEP?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, their budget request was P50 million but it was reduced to P20 million, so, the financial impact will be on the buildings and equipment.

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). May tanong din po si Honorable Elago, what will be the effect noong 24 percent cut sa Personnel Services?

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, nagsabi na rin po ako na kung maaari pong makapagbigay na lamang ang PhilSCA sa atin, at ibabahagi ko po sa Kapulungan na ito, ang paliwanag hinggil po sa 24 percent dahil ang kinababahala naman po natin diyan ay iyong dami rin ng maaaring mawalan ng trabaho o nawalan na ng trabaho dahil dito sa ganitong panukalang kaltas-budget para sa susunod na fiscal year. Aabangan na lang po, hihintayin ng Representasyon na ito ang tungkol sa 24 percent na cut na iyan sa Personnel Services, pero andito ang atin pong paninindigan ay dapat pong suportahan ang faculty, ang ating mga professors, ang nonteaching personnel sa loob po ng university dahil lahat po iyan ay parte ng napakahalagang community na humuhubog po sa mas mataas na edukasyon.

Panghuli, Mr. Speaker, tungkol po sa tuition and other school fee increases, hindi pa po nagbibigay sa amin ang CHED ng report at listahan noong mga nagtaas ng tuition para sa taong 2019 at 2020. During the budget briefing, they reported that for the current academic year, the tuition increased by 10.7 percent and for other school fees po, by 12.89 percent. Now, Mr. Speaker, dahil wala pa po tayong hawak na document, at sana po ay maibigay na ito ngayong gabi, what are the peso equivalents of the said percentage?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, there are various data here which we can provide to the distinguished Lady, but from the statistics, the average percentage of the increase in tuition fees here is 10.7 percent.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, iyong peso equivalent po ang hinihingi namin at kukunin ko po iyan pagkatapos ng aking turn dito. Ang gusto ko lang pong sabihin, kailangan din pag-aralan ng Kongreso na ito kung paano po halos dumoble iyong tuition and other school fees, and increase po, sa mga eskuwelahan matapos pong mapatupad ang TRAIN. From 6 percent noong 2017 to 2018, nag-jump po iyan to 11 percent o halos 11 percent the next year.

So, ito po iyong dapat nating pag-aralan at bilang panghuli, iyong mga autonomous or deregulated private higher education institutions natin, exempted po ba sila sa CMO 3, series of 2012? Exempted po ba iyong mga private schools natin sa mga gabay na nakapaloob sa CMO 3?

REP. DAZA. Exempted ang mga private po.

REP. ELAGO. May mga private HEIs po tayo, at mayroon po dito na nag-e-enjoy ng autonomous or deregulated status. Hihingi po tayo ng listahan niyan mula sa CHED. Totoo po ba na sila ay hindi na dapat sumunod sa CMO 3, series of 2012?

REP. DAZA. Mr. Speaker, they follow the process but the CHED does not control their fees.

REP. ELAGO. Sorry po, Mr. Speaker, hindi ko po masyadong narinig ang sagot ng ating distinguished Sponsor. Are the autonomous or deregulated higher education institutions that are private schools, exempted from following the guidelines enumerated in CMO 3, series of 2012?

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The honorable Sponsor, you may proceed.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, with regard to autonomous or deregulated higher education institutions, talagang they have that freedom except that kailangan din silang mag-report sa CHED. In fact, the CHED will be coming up with a new CMO to revise the assessment procedures in order to review the operations of those deregulated schools.

REP. ELAGO. Mr. Speaker, may kopya po ako dito noong mga benefits, wala naman po doon nakalagay na exempted sila sa CMO 3, series of 2012. Nowhere in the Manual for Private Higher Education Institutions

where it says there na exempted po sila. Kaya po iyong CHED, dapat po lahat ay sumunod doon sa patakaran sang-ayon sa CMO 3 para po matiyak natin na kung mayroon mang pagtataas, ito po ay rasonable at hindi iyong magagamit lamang para palakihin iyong kita ng ating mga private schools.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, if you may allow me to read CMO 19, Section 15 of the CHED memorandum:

Privilege to increase tuition fees without securing a permit from CHED—The HEIs should ensure that the existing CHED PSGs, on increases in tuition and other school fees, are fully complied with especially those pertaining to the consultation process and requirements. The HEIs should inform the CHED Central Office through the appropriate CHEDRO, of these increases before the start of the academic year.

REP. ELAGO. Okay, malinaw po, Mr. Speaker, na mayroon pa rin pong mga requirements at kinakailangan na compliance na nasasaad sa batas. So, hindi po sila talagang exempted doon sa mga guidelines na nakasaad po sa CMO.

REP. MATUGAS. Yes, Your Honor, as part of the mandate of the CHED to supervise all HEIs in our country.

REP. ELAGO. Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, sa pagsagot ng aking mga katanungan. Bilang panghuli, nais ko lang pong tawagan ang UP at PUP na i-uphold ang tagumpay ng mga estudyante na nakasaad sa LFS-DND Accord, sa Ramos-Abueva Accord, na nagba-ban ng military and police presence sa loob ng mga campus. Kung kailangan na itong i-review, kung nararapat na itong i-review, kailangan din po nating protektahan ang mga naipanalo na mga iyan ng mga pamantasan at ng mga iskolar ng bayan.

Kasunod po, dahil nabanggit ng CHED na mayroon silang supervisory power or responsibility sa NTF-ECLAC, nais ko rin maibalita na sa Isabela State University, sa kasalukuyan po, doon ay may wall of commitment vilifying and smearing the reputation of KABATAAN Party-List. So, I strongly urge, and I challenge the CHED, kung talagang mayroon silang supervisory power, na maipatanggal itong wall of commitment na ito at kung magpapasok sila ng mga ganitong tipo ng mga activities, kailangan pong may mag-vet muna sa katotohanan ng mga information na iyan at sa mga laman ng mga posters na iyan. Ang mga ganyang tipo ng posters, naglalagay po sa panganib hindi lang po sa akin kundi sa lahat ng mga kabataan at iskolar ng bayan na nagtitiwala at mga miyembro rin ng KABATAAN Party-List.

Maraming salamat, Mr. Speaker. Maraming salamat, distinguished Sponsor.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, last to interpellate, may we recognize the Minority Leader, Hon. Bienvenido “Benny” M. Abante Jr.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). The Minority Leader from the Sixth District of Manila, Hon. Benny Abante is recognized for his interpellation or manifestation.

REP. ABANTE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. This is a short manifestation and question.

I would be able to understand if the state universities become the hotbed of militancy and free expression but not of violence or armed struggle, but when the universities become also a hotbed of corruption, that is a very different thing. So, my first question is this: what happened to the anomaly involving the Tulong Dunong Scholarship Program? Let me explain. The COA Audit Report noted the poor utilization of the Tulong Dunong Scholarship Program in the Polytechnic University of the Philippines which happens to be in my district.

The COA said, and I am just citing what COA said, that the inadequacy of the guidelines and delayed actions by PUP officials resulted in the non-utilization of Tulong Dunong’s P36.684 million-peso budget for School Year 2015 to 2016. It was noted that the same anomaly persisted in 2017 and 2018, and the total is around P100 million pesos for three consecutive years. Now, the COA said that there seems to be no clear-cut guidelines in implementing the program because of the confusion as to whether or not the validated list of beneficiaries should still be approved by the Commission on Higher Education.

I just would like a short answer to that, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, may I just have a clarification of your question? Are you addressing it to PUP in particular?

REP. ABANTE. Yes.

REP. MATUGAS. Mr. Speaker, may I ask for a one-minute suspension.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). May I suggest to the Sponsor, as I will not recognize your request for a one-minute suspension, to just confer with the members of the CHED family.

REP. ABANTE. Ganito na lang, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Yes, the Minority Leader will continue.

REP. ABANTE. I will just ask the question and they can just give me a written answer, okay, not anymore to answer here in the Plenary for the purpose of saving time now.

REP. MATUGAS. Thank you, Minority Leader.

REP. ABANTE. Second question, why is it that the PUP was not able to implement the three infrastructure projects contained in its 2018 budget in the GAA amounting to P54,128,000? I would like to note that, in the 2018 COA Report, the COA cited incompetence and delayed action—this is not my statement but this is from the COA report, okay—of PUP officials as the cause or the failure to implement the projects. Now, you do not need to answer, but just give me a written answer to that.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). May I request the Sponsor to...

REP. ABANTE. Can I just ask them to listen for a while?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Okay, Mr. Sponsor, Honorable Matugas.

REP. MATUGAS. Your Honor, Mr. Speaker, the PUP officers promised to submit the answers to your questions within seven days, Your Honor.

REP. ABANTE. Good. Third question—sandali, wala na, tapos na. What actions, if any, did PUP take to pay the unsettled suspension and notice of disallowances issued by the COA in its 2018 Audit Report amounting to P208,514,845.41 and P249,866,198.56, respectively? Now, this is the highest fund suspension and disallowance made by the COA for any state college or university. This is not just trying to say something out of the blue, this is in the COA Audit Report, and I believe that the people would like to have some answers because in the past, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sponsor, the PUP has been involved in some anomalies many, many years ago, perhaps not under the watch of the officers now. In the past, they were involved in some anomalies.

So, iyon lang po ang questions ko, Mr. Speaker, Your Honor. There being no more questions to be asked, this Representation moves to terminate the interpellations.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, we join the honorable Minority Leader in moving to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the proposed budgets of the Commission on Higher Education, the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, the University of the Philippines System and the Philippine State College of Aeronautics.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the joint motion to terminate the period of interpellation and debate on the budgets of the Commission on Higher Education, University of the Philippines System, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, and Philippine State College of Aeronautics is terminated.

REP. PALMA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). 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, and Communications, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 4420, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING MT. ARAYAT IN THE PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA AS PROTECTED AREA UNDER THE CATEGORY OF PROTECTED LANDSCAPE, PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Gonzales (Aurelio)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

House Bill No. 4421, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE EXTENSION CAMPUSES OF THE DON HONORIO VENTURA STATE UNIVERSITY INTO SATELLITE CAMPUSES IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF STO. TOMAS, PORAC, LUBAO, CANDABA, AND APALIT, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Gonzales (Aurelio)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND
TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 4422, entitled:

“AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE BUREAU OF
FIRE PROTECTION AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bustos
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER
AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 4423, entitled:

“AN ACT UPGRADING THE RANK
STRUCTURE AND CLASSIFICATION OF
THE UNIFORMED PERSONNEL OF THE
BUREAU OF FIRE PROTECTION AND
THE BUREAU OF JAIL MANAGEMENT
AND PENOLOGY, AMENDING FOR
THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO.
9263, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
‘BUREAU OF FIRE PROTECTION AND
BUREAU OF JAIL MANAGEMENT AND
PENOLOGY PROFESSIONALIZATION
ACT OF 2004,’ AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Bustos
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER
AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 4424, entitled:

“AN ACT RATIONALIZING THE TAX
TREATMENT FOR THE PHILIPPINE
CHARITY SWEEPSTAKES OFFICE,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE THE
NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE
OF 1997, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Bustos
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND
MEANS

House Bill No. 4425, entitled:

“AN ACT PRESCRIBING A STANDARDIZED
RATE FOR OPTIONAL STANDARD
DEDUCTION AT FORTY PERCENT (40%)
OF GROSS INCOME FOR ALL TAXPAYERS,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION
34(L) OF NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE
CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED”

By Representative Ong (Jose)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND
MEANS

House Bill No. 4426, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING OWWA OFW
CENTERS IN EVERY PROVINCE AND

REGION OF THE COUNTRY, PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFORE AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSEAS
WORKERS AFFAIRS

House Bill No. 4427, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE OLD SAN VICENTE
CHURCH, GABALDON BUILDING, PALACIO
DE GOBERNADOR, SPANISH BALDI,
DIEGO SILANG MARKER, ANCESTRAL
HOUSES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN
VICENTE, PROVINCE OF ILOCOS SUR, AS
CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL PATRIMONY
OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN VICENTE
AND BESTOWING IT WITH RIGHTS
AND PRIVILEGES ACCORDED MUSEUM
CURATORS”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION
AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 4428, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING STA. CATALINA
ROAD TRAVERSING TO BARANGAY
CABITTAOGAN AND SITIO CALAWAAN,
TAMURONG ROAD INTO A NATIONAL
ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 4429, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDIGENOUS
TRAINING CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY
OF MAGSINGAL, PROVINCE OF ILOCOS
SUR, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INDIGENOUS
CULTURAL COMMUNITIES AND
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

House Bill No. 4430, entitled:

“AN ACT INITIATING PROGRESSION OF
THE GARLIC COMMERCE IN THE
PHILIPPINES WITH THE DESIDERATUM
OF ACCOMPLISHING THE SAME
AS A STAPLE COMMODITY IN THE
AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
AND FOOD

House Bill No. 4431, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION/FORMATION OF BARANGAY TOURISM AND INVESTMENTS COUNCILS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 4432, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING APPOINTIVE OFFICIALS FROM RUNNING FOR ELECTIVE POSITIONS WITHIN THREE YEARS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE EXPIRY DATE OF THEIR APPOINTMENT”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON SUFFRAGE AND ELECTORAL REFORMS

House Bill No. 4433, entitled:

“AN ACT INTEGRATING ‘SCOUTING’ IN THE COURSE OF STUDY AMIDST EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, WITH A VIEW TO ACCOMPLISH THE SAME AS A CORE ACADEMIC SUBJECT, TO IMBUE IN THE YOUTH PATRIOTISM, COURAGE, SELF RELIANCE AND KINDRED VIRTUES”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 4434, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10176 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN ACT REVIVING THE OBSERVANCE OF ARBOR DAY BY AUTHORIZING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS THE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CELEBRATING THE DAY FOR TREE PLANTING AS AN ANNUAL EVENT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Savellano
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REFORESTATION

House Bill No. 4435, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING AND FURTHER PROHIBITING THE USAGE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS, PROVIDING PENALTIES, LEVIES AND INCENTIVES FOR INDUSTRIES, BUSINESS ENTITIES AND CONSUMERS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Teves (Jose)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 4438, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF BENGUET GENERAL HOSPITAL FROM TWO HUNDRED (200) TO FOUR HUNDRED (400), UPGRADING ITS FACILITIES AND HEALTH CARE SERVICE, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS MEDICAL PERSONNEL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Fongwan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

House Bill No. 4439, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING A NEW DISTRICT ENGINEERING OFFICE IN THE THIRD LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Amatong
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 4440, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING THE MURCIELAGOS ISLAND PROTECTED LANDSCAPE AND SEASCAPE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LABASON, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE AS AN ECOTOURISM ZONE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Amatong
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 4441, entitled:

“AN ACT RECLASSIFYING CERTAIN PARCELS OF LAND OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN LOCATED IN BARANGAYS CABIGAAN, MAGBABADIL, BARAKE, IRAAN, SAGPANGAN, ISAUB, SAN JUAN, APURAWAN AND CULANDANUM OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF ABORLAN, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AS ALIENABLE AND DISPOSABLE LAND”

By Representative Acosta
TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

House Bill No. 4442, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MULTISPECIES MARINE HATCHERY IN BARANGAY BINDUYAN, CITY OF PUERTO PRINCESA, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Acosta
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

House Bill No. 4443, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FISH PORT IN BARANGAY MACARASCAS IN THE CITY OF PUERTO PRINCESA AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Acosta

TO THE COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

House Bill No. 4444, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A REGULAR DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS’ CONSULAR OFFICE IN THE PROVINCE OF COTABATO, PARTICULARLY IN KIDAPAWAN CITY, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Caoagdan

TO THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

House Bill No. 4445, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE NATIONAL RAINWATER HARVESTING BOARD UNDER THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTION, DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION OF RAINWATER HARVESTING TECHNOLOGY AS A MEASURE TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS BROUGHT ABOUT BY CLIMATE CHANGE AND EXTREME WEATHER PHENOMENA LIKE SUPER TYPHOONS AND THE EL NIÑO THAT ARE THE CAUSES OF DOWNSTREAM FLOODING, SEVERE DROUGHT AND OTHER PROBLEMS ON FRESH WATER, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Savellano

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 4446, entitled:

“AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING A NATIONAL SOIL HEALTH PROGRAM FOR THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF NATIONWIDE SOIL ANALYTICAL SERVICES AND PROMOTION OF SOIL CONSERVATION AND FERTILITY MANAGEMENT OF ALL AGRICULTURAL LAND IN THE COUNTRY AND APPROPRIATE FUNDS THEREOF TO ABATE SOIL DEGRADATION AND IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL LAND PRODUCTIVITY AND THEREBY ENSURE FOOD SECURITY”

By Representative Savellano

TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

House Bill No. 4447, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Hernandez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 4448, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE KOLAMBUGAN-TANGKAL PROVINCIAL ROAD IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF KOLAMBUGAN AND TANGKAL, PROVINCE OF LANA DEL NORTE INTO A NATIONAL ROAD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representatives Dimaporo (Abdullah) and Dimaporo (Khalid)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 4449, entitled:

“AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE OF SEXUAL CONSENT FOR STRONGER PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLE 266-A (d) OF ACT NO. 3815, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE”

By Representative Castelo

TO THE COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF LAWS

House Bill No. 4450, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS TO DONATE ANY AND ALL UNSPOILED AND UNSOLD FOOD TO RECIPIENTS CATERING TO THE FOOD-DEPRIVED SECTORS OF SOCIETY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Salo

TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FOOD SECURITY

House Bill No. 4451, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND COMPENSATION FOR EDUCATORS IN BASIC EDUCATION”

By Representative Hernandez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 4452, entitled:

“AN ACT ABOLISHING THE TRAVEL TAX”

By Representative Haresco

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

House Bill No. 4453, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING INVESTMENT RESTRICTIONS IN COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 541, AS AMENDED BY LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS NO. 630, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Haresco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 4454, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR WHISTLEBLOWER BILL OF RIGHTS”

By Representative Haresco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 4455, entitled:

“AN ACT LOWERING THE CORPORATE INCOME TAX RATE, AMENDING SECTIONS 27 AND 28 OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Haresco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND
MEANS

House Bill No. 4456, entitled:

“AN ACT DEFINING GOOD CONDUCT, INSTITUTING ADDITIONAL MEASURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOOD CONDUCT TIME ALLOWANCE, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE ARTICLES 97 AND 99 OF ACT NO. 3815, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE”

By Representative Haresco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 4457, entitled:

“AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7042, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE FOREIGN INVESTMENTS ACT OF 1991, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8179, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Haresco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
AND THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND
INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 4458, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING TWO (2) NEW BRANCHES OF MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURTS, ALL IN THE SECOND DISTRICT OF AKLAN, AMENDING FOR THE

PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ‘THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980’, AS AMENDED AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Haresco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 4459, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING AND REGULATING THE USE OF WEARABLE BODY CAMERAS AND DASHBOARD CAMERAS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS IN THE COURSE OF CONDUCTING A SEARCH OR MAKING AN ARREST, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Haresco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER
AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 4460, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING TEMPORARY RESIDENCY STATUS TO CERTAIN ALIENS IN THE PHILIPPINES UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS”

By Representative Haresco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 4461, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MAXIMUM SECURITY FACILITY FOR PERSONS CONVICTED OF HEINOUS CRIMES WITHIN THE NATIONAL PENITENTIARY SYSTEM UNDER THE BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Haresco
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 4462, entitled:

“AN ACT MANDATING THE MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY TO PROMOTE FAIR AND TRANSPARENT DESTINATION AND OTHER SHIPPING CHARGES AMONG FORWARDERS AND AGENTS OF INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING LINES”

By Representative Ong (Ronnie)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill No. 4464, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MAGNA CARTA FOR BARANGAYS”

By Representative Puno
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 313, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND
COMMENDING POLICE COLONEL
EDWIN A. QUILATES, PROVINCIAL
DIRECTOR OF THE BATANGAS POLICE
PROVINCIAL OFFICE, AS ONE OF
THE 2019 OUTSTANDING FILIPINO
POLICE OFFICERS AWARDED BY THE
METROBANK FOUNDATION”

By Representative Bolilia
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 314, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING PROFOUND
CONDOLENCES ON THE DEMISE
OF FORMER SECRETARY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND
NATURAL RESOURCES REGINA PAZ
‘GINA’ LOPEZ”

By Representative Olivarez
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 315, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE
CREATION OF A STANDING COMMITTEE
ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES”

By Representative Legarda
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 316, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING
THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO (CHURCH
OF CHRIST) FOR SETTING A NEW
WORLD RECORD FOR ‘MOST PEOPLE
BAPTIZED’ ON SEPTEMBER 7, 2019
WHICH COINCIDES WITH THE 10TH
YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF BROTHER
EDUARDO V. MANOLO AS INC
EXECUTIVE MINISTER”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Joint Resolution No. 13, entitled:

“HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION DIRECTING
THE CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE ON CIVIL AVIATION
AUTHORITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
(COCCAAP) TO CONTINUE ITS
MANDATE AS PROVIDED FOR IN

SECTION 91 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9497
OR THE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY
ACT OF 2008”

By Representative Ong (Ronnie)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Joint Resolution No. 14, entitled:

“HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION EXTENDING
THE LIFE OF THE CONGRESSIONAL
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON CIVIL
AVIATION AUTHORITY OF THE
PHILIPPINES (COCCAAP) TO CONTINUE
ITS MANDATE AS PROVIDED FOR IN
SECTION 91 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO.
9497, CREATING THE CIVIL AVIATION
AUTHORITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
(CAAP)”

By Representative Sarmiento
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated 2 August 2019 of Usec. Ernesto G.
Carolina, Administrator, Philippine Veterans Affairs
Office (PVAO), submitting the PVAO Agency
Action Plan and Status of Implementation on the
Audit Observations and Recommendations for the
Calendar Year 2018.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letters dated August 8, 2019 of Sec. Adelino B.
Sitoy, Presidential Adviser on Legislative Affairs
and Head, PLLO, submitting the details on
Appropriations, Obligations and Disbursements for
the quarter ending June 30, 2019 and for the month
ending July 31, 2019, pursuant to Section 101 of
Republic Act No. 11260.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated August 20, 2019 of Jose B. Patalinjug
III, Regional Director, Department of Science
and Technology (DOST), furnishing the House of
Representatives a copy of the DOST-NCR 2018
Annual Report.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY

Letter dated August 23, 2019 of Delfin N. Lorenzana,
Secretary, Department of National Defense,
submitting the results of the operational activities
of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) based
on its tasks in the implementation of Martial Law
in Mindanao covering the period of June 1 to 30,
2019.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE
AND SECURITY

Agency Action Plan and Status of Implementation
(AAPSI) on the audit observations and
recommendations of the Construction Industry
Authority of the Philippines (CIAP).
TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

2018 Legislative-Executive Development Advisory
Council (LEDAC) Accomplishment Report.
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. PALMA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend
the session until September 13, at one o'clock in the
afternoon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Abu). Is there
any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the
session is suspended until one o'clock in the afternoon,
September 13, 2019.

It was 10:09 p.m.