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Journal

SESSION NO. 43
Monday, January 20, 2020

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

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CALL TO ORDER

At 3:00 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Vicente C. Sotto III, called the session to order.

PRAYER

Sen. Francis "Tol" N. Tolentino led the prayer, to wit:

**Prayer for the Victims of
Taal Volcano Eruption**

Almighty Father, we come to You today, declaring Your great might and power over all the earth and acknowledging Your never-changing mercy, faithfulness, and steadfast love to us, Your people.

Right now, we lift up to You the condition of our brethren affected by the still-unfolding Taal Volcano eruption as they stay in the evacuation centers, especially those in the towns of Agoncillo, Alitagtag, Balete, Cuenca, Laurel, Sto. Tomas, Malvar, Mataas na Kahoy, San Nicolas, Sta. Teresita, Taal, Talisay, the cities of Lipa and Tanauan in Batangas, among others; the towns of Alfonso, Naic, Dasmarinas, and Tagaytay in Cavite, and some towns in Laguna.

Protect them using Your mighty hands, provide for their needs and keep them in Your

perfect peace. Bless them, as well as the local government leaders who need Your guidance as they lead their communities towards the uncertainties of tomorrow.

We likewise seek Your intervention, through the intercession of St. Francis of Assisi, for the protection and rescue of the animals left behind in the danger zones—not only our pets but also the horses, cows and the goats and the rest of the creatures which have helped us grow our land and feed our families. Grant them Your care and Your healing power as our human ties with them is a gift from You.

We also remember in prayer the brave men and women, the volunteers, the private sector who are helping in the relief efforts and those in the evacuation centers, as well as the people who, without hesitation, gave their aid. We likewise include the hardworking employees of the hotels and restaurants who are keeping watch over their establishments and helping these to recover. Keep them from harm and allow their good deeds to multiply and flourish.

Lastly, we also lift up to You in prayer our government officials, members of the military and the police, who are there from day one giving strength and hope to the people. Give them wisdom and knowledge, O Lord, as they perform their duties.

P.M.

In the midst of this calamity, we claim Your unshakeable promise that even when the "mountains may move and the hills disappear," Your faithful love for all of us will remain and Your covenant of blessings for us will never be broken.

Help us, Your people, rise up from the ashes and allow us to see Your goodness in the midst of these trials.

This we ask, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of Holy Spirit.

Amen.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

The Senate Choir led the singing of the national anthem and thereafter rendered the song, entitled *Dakilang Lahi*.

ROLL CALL

Upon direction of the Senate President, the Secretary of the Senate, Atty. Myra Marie D. Villarica, called the roll, to which the following senators responded:

Angara, S.	Pangilinan, F. N.
Binay, M. L. N. S.	Pimentel III, A. K.
De la Rosa, R. B. M.	Poe, G.
Drilon, F. M.	Recto, R. G.
Gatchalian, W.	Revilla Jr., R. B.
Go, C. L. T.	Sotto III, V. C.
Hontiveros, R.	Tolentino, F. T. N.
Lacson, P. M.	Villanueva, J.
Lapid, M. L. M.	Villar, C. A.
Marcos, I. R.	Zubiri, J. M. F.
Pacquiao, E. M. D	

With 21 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senator Gordon arrived after the roll call.

Senator Cayetano was absent.

Senator De Lima was unable to attend the session as she was under detention.

GREETINGS

At this juncture, Senator Zubiri greeted everyone a happy new year and announced that the day was the first session day of a new decade. He also greeted the following senators on the occasion of

their birth anniversaries: Senators Tolentino (January 3), Recto (January 11), Pimentel (January 20) and De la Rosa (January 21).

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, the session was suspended.

It was 3:13 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:19 p.m., the session was resumed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

At this juncture, Senator Zubiri acknowledged the presence in the gallery of the following guests:

- Rep. Francisco "Jun" Gamboa-Datol Jr. of the Senior Citizens' Party List;
- Mayor Datu Pax Ali Sangki Mangudadatu of the Municipality of Datu Abdullah Sangki and son of Governor Mangudadatu;
- Students and teachers of Basilan State College of Isabela, Basilan; and
- Retired General Leonardo Lopez.

Senate President Sotto welcomed the guests to the Senate.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNALS

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the Journals of Session Nos. 40 (December 16, 2019) and 42 (December 18, 2019) and considered them approved.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, the session was suspended.

It was 3:21 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:21 p.m., the session was resumed.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR ZUBIRI

Availing himself of the privilege hour, Senator Zubiri stated that as the country reeled from the



devastation wrought by the eruption of Taal Volcano on January 12, 2020, and the other natural disasters, it was time for Congress to act fast on pending legislation for the creation of the Department of Disaster Resilience.

Following is the full text of Senator Zubiri's privilege speech accompanied by a slide presentation shown on the screen:

The New Year started with a bang! Unfortunately, this is not the bang that we all wanted. I am referring to the tantrums of the once sleepy Taal Volcano which, on January 12, 2020, went into phreatic eruption or a steam-driven explosion that occurs when hot volcanic materials come in contact with water. The eruption spew plumes of ash into the atmosphere as high as 15 kilometers reaching Metro Manila and as far as the provinces of Central Luzon. It caused the evacuation of more than 500,000 people from several towns in Batangas, the home province of our President Pro Tempore, Sen. Ralph Recto, and even in Cavite, the home province of three of our colleagues, Sen. Francis Tolentino, Sen. Ping Lacson, and Sen. Bong Revilla.

Hours after the Taal eruption, we could see the devastation it brought to the towns surrounding Taal that prompted authorities to declare a 14-kilometer radius permanent danger zone and ordered the lockdown of several towns in Batangas. Social media is replete with photos and videos of the devastation as well as the spirit of *bayanihan* and heroism among our Filipinos. Fortunately, there was no direct human casualty from the eruption itself. I will not delve too much on the Taal eruption because I know several of my colleagues will be tackling this issue in their speeches today. I will discuss other natural disasters that hit the country at a time when people should be celebrating the holidays.

The turn of the decade should have been a time of joy and celebration for Filipinos all over the nation. We should all have been safe in the comforts of our homes, enjoying our time with our families. Unfortunately, this was not the case for thousands of Filipino families, who spent the last months of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 in a state of turmoil, reeling from the back-to-back devastation of earthquakes, typhoons, and volcanic eruptions. We can see in the screen what I am talking about.

In October and December, a series of high-magnitude earthquakes hit Mindanao,

particularly North Cotabato and Davao del Sur. It began with a 6.3-magnitude earthquake that had its epicenter at Tulunan, North Cotabato, on October 16, 2019. Not too long after, on October 29, Tulunan once again suffered a quake, this time even stronger at a magnitude 6.6. And then it happened again, on October 31 when Tulunan was once more shaken by a 6.5-magnitude earthquake.

Apart from Tulunan, the Municipality of Makilala in North Cotabato and the City of Kidapawan as well as the Municipalities of Sta. Cruz, Matanao, Magsaysay, and Bansalan, and the City of Digos in Davao del Sur were on high alert, experiencing Intensity VII shaking on the PHIVOLCS Earthquake Intensity Scale (PEIS). Intensity VII, as you might know, is marked "destructive" on the scale, and indeed, the combined earthquakes have left terrible damages to our people. According to the reports of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), the North Cotabato earthquakes damaged 56,779 structures, of which 47 are schools, 39 are health facilities, and 27,183 are houses. Worse still are the statistics on human casualties – about 30 listed as dead, 11 missing, and 220 more injured. Most of them were in communities up high in the mountains because of landslides.

And as communities affected by the North Cotabato earthquakes were slowly trying to recover from the disaster, Mindanao was once again hit by a massive one—this time, 6.9 magnitude earthquake. I would dread a 6.9 magnitude earthquake in Manila if that happens here. It happened once again in Matanao, Davao del Sur on December 15, 2019, which affected 218 barangays in Regions XI and XII. It left 13 deaths in its wake, and 210 more injured. There were 45,860 structures damaged, of which 98 are health facilities, 397 are schools, and 45,085 are houses.

December was particularly disaster-struck because that same month, the nation was hit by its final two typhoons of the year. In all, we experienced 21 typhoons in 2019. That is a high average since it is usually 17 or 18. We were hit by 21 typhoons – Typhoon *Amang* hit us in January; *Betty* in February; *Chedeng* in March; *Dodong* in May; *Egay* in June; *Falcon* and *Goring* in July; *Hanna*, *Ineng*, and *Jenny* in August; *Kabayan*, *Liwayway*, *Marilyn*, *Nimfa*, and *Onyok* all in September; *Perla* in October; *Quiel*, *Ramon*, *Sarah*, and *Tisoy* in November; and finally the clincher, *Ursula* in December.

Some of these typhoons were more destructive than others. Typhoon *Amang* hit



CARAGA hard. *Ineng* left considerable damages in North Luzon, *Tisoy* and *Ursula* count among them as some of the more destructive typhoons to enter the nation last year.

Typhoon *Tisoy* stormed through CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, CARAGA, Regions III, V, VI, and VII in early December, resulting in at least four deaths and 561,445 structures damaged. Of that overwhelming number, a total of 63,466 homes and two health facilities were left completely and irreparably destroyed.

Not long after *Tisoy*, *Ursula* came on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day itself. *Ursula* ravaged many of the same places as *Tisoy* hitting MIMAROPA, CARAGA, and Regions VI, VII, and VIII, particularly the towns and provinces of Panay of Senator Drilon. *Ursula* left at least 57 people dead in its wake and 369 injured. I can only guess many of the deaths and the injuries were due to the fact that who would think would be hit by a typhoon on Christmas day? It is probably one in a million incidents. It also resulted in 531,304 damaged structures, 530,696 of those being houses, 467 of them were schools, and 32 health facilities.

And now, in what should have been the bright start of the decade, provinces in Southern Luzon are clouded over by ash-darkened skies, with Taal Volcano on Alert Level 4 and the fear of a more even violent eruption that has sent people panic-buying for supplies, even beyond the immediately affected areas.

The nation is gripped by unrest. Even with disaster-preparedness strategies in place, as we are a nation prepared for calamities as we have this year in and year out, the sheer intensity of these calamities has rendered many Filipinos completely devastated. The Mindanao earthquakes, typhoon *Ursula* and typhoon *Tisoy* left a combined 157,168 houses totally damaged, apart from the many more that are in dire need of repair. About 87,000 Filipino families have been left effectively homeless.

During our break, I was able to survey some of these calamity-ravaged areas and conducted relief operations in Kidapawan and Cotabato in November, and Davao Del Sur and Capiz in early January. I was able to see for myself the damage that was caused by these calamities. I learned a lot which I would like to share to this august Chamber for positive legislative solutions.

I saw the dire need towards our evacuees, many of whom had to live out in tents in the wake of the disasters that hit them. *Hirap na hirap na po ang mga kababayang natin. Marami po sa kanila ay hindi makakabalik sa*

kanilang lugar dahil hindi pa naa-assess ng mga opisyal kung ligtas na ba ang kanilang mga kababayahan. The people told me the reason why. It is because the local disaster risk reduction management councils have not yet been convened—may I repeat—it is because the local disaster risk reduction management councils have not yet been convened to assess the damage of residential buildings, whether a residential building is partially or totally damaged.

This is the same story I got when I went to Capiz last Friday, when I met with Governor Contreras together with the provincial DSWD head and the PSWD. They basically said that they have the funds to be released to the victims, P30,000 for the totally damaged and P10,000 for partially damaged. Unfortunately, they have not released it yet because the councils have not been organized to identify what is totally damaged and what is partially damaged. So, three weeks have elapsed and passed and they have not gotten their financial assistance which is available already to them by government.

I would like to repeat: Government financial assistance for the affected families will depend on the help or with the assessment done by these councils. As a result, many find themselves stuck in limbo, not even knowing if they have homes to go back to. The typical response of government agencies in situations like this, *nagtuturuan po sila kung sino ang* primarily responsible *sa pag-assess ng damage sa mga kababayahan ng ating mga nasalantang kababayahan.*

Another concern is the designs of our school buildings. The DPWH designed our classrooms and school buildings to be typhoon-resistant or at least can withstand strong typhoons. Look at these buildings in Mindanao during the earthquakes. Solidly built, heavily-constructed with cement and steel or *kabilya*, these could withstand a typhoon Signal No. 5. But it is nothing compared to a 6.9 magnitude or a 7-magnitude earthquake. These are actual pictures when we visited Davao Del Sur.

These buildings can withstand strong typhoons. Typically, these classrooms and school buildings will have concrete flooring and walls, and galvanized roofing, and if the school building is two-storey or multi-storey, even the flooring for the upper floors are concrete. It is appropriate for the typhoon-belt or typhoon-prone provinces of our country. These are the provinces of Luzon and Visayas and even eastern parts of Mindanao and CARAGA region.

However, there are provinces in Mindanao that are not typhoon-prone. We have just found out that they are actually more earthquake-prone. These are the Southern, Central, and Western Mindanao provinces. These provinces are more prone to earthquakes and other natural calamities. So, when we use engineering designs for classrooms or school buildings suitable to withstand typhoons in earthquake-prone areas, the result is different when it comes to earthquakes. Easily, the classrooms collapse on their very own weight. As we can see from these photos in Davao del Sur, these buildings are already condemned; and they are brand-new buildings.

The local authorities and DPWH district engineers, aware of this development as a result of the strong earthquakes that hit Mindanao in the recent months, could not just redesign or revise the design of classrooms or school buildings appropriate in their areas, meaning, a design that can withstand strong earthquakes because there are designs for this.

I learned, for instance, that in the United States, structures near the San Andreas Fault in California are not allowed to be built this way. They use dry walls—what we call plywood cement boards or high-density fiber boards—as walling for these classrooms, or other durable but lighter materials because when there is a strong earthquake, it does not collapse right away; it can move and sway with the ground as the earthquake is ongoing.

It is because the design for our classrooms and school buildings has to be approved by the DPWH and deviations or revisions from the DPWH-approved designs would warrant a negative COA finding or even Ombudsman cases. Thus, there is a need for the DPWH to consider topography and geohazards particular in the area in designing our classrooms and school buildings.

That is why Senator Lacson, chairman of the committee in charge for the Department of Disaster Resilience, really has to look into the next deliberation on how we can design structures for particular areas—if it is typhoon-prone or earthquake-prone—with the approval of a new Building Code for these particular projects, without hazard to those who are implementing it. *Kasi kung papalitan natin iyong hollow block wall ng plyboards or what we call high-fiber boards which can be used to withstand earthquakes, baka sabihin, na--one, two, three or parang in-undercut at substandard iyong project.* So, we really have to come up with a design. It cannot be just “one design fits all”

for our classrooms and school buildings for these particular areas.

In these trying times, we rely upon the timely release of our calamity funds to help our people get on track to recovery. If the funding situation for *Tisoy* and *Ursula* is anything to go by, then it seems we need speedier mobilization systems for the release of our funds. As of the most recent NDRRMC reports, the cost of assistance provided by the government after *Tisoy* was P95.7 million. That is against the devastating P5.9 billion cost of damages wrought by the typhoon. The situation for *Ursula* is much the same—we have provided affected communities with P94.4 million in assistance but this is nothing against the P3.4 billion cost on infrastructural and agricultural damages in Panay Island, Northern Cebu, and several other areas that were damaged by *Ursula*. These do not include the social cost resulting from the trauma and displacement of our *kababayans* from their residence and place of work or livelihood.

Apart from the national budget's apportioned Calamity Fund, which is held and released by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) needing the approval of the President, we call on our agencies to utilize their Quick Response Funds (QRFs) with utmost urgency. The longer assistance is delayed, the longer people will be forced to endure day-to-day living in untenable conditions.

The Calamity Fund, which is P16 billion this year, is helpful only in conjunction with QRFs which do not need to be approved by the DBM for release. The Department of Public Works and Highways, the Office of Civil Defense, the Department of Education, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the Department of Agriculture all have built-in QRFs that will serve to address relevant emergency and rehabilitation operations under the agency's purview.

If the P16 billion allocated for Calamity Fund for the year 2020 will not be sufficient to alleviate the sufferings of our *kababayans* as a result of these natural disasters and help them get back on their feet, these government agencies can tap on their respective offices' savings from 2019 and even from the Calamity Fund. If that will not even suffice, I am prepared to file, and many of our colleagues have told me that they are willing to support the passage of a supplemental budget which we had done because of typhoon *Frank*. We approved at that time P1.6 billion additional funds for typhoon *Frank* that helped the province of Iloilo and many provinces of Panay.

We were both coauthors of that, Senator Gordon, my chairman in the Red Cross.

But even with the timely release of funds, we still need a more coordinated disaster response body in place to tightly manage disaster-related operations, from preparedness to rehabilitation. Our agencies do not have disaster response plans in place. Without an agency to lead their efforts, disaster response becomes haphazard and ineffective. The NDRRMC was not set up to fulfill the all-encompassing function of overseeing all agencies in times of disaster. For crying out loud, they still have to meet and coordinate amongst each other, and even just to set the meeting is already a disaster on its own.

Example, in Capiz on damaged houses, as what I mentioned earlier, they still have not gone down to the local level to say what was totally damaged or partly damaged. What we need is a Department of Disaster Resilience which will ensure a more efficient, coordinated, and complete system of disaster management—from risk assessment to emergency response right down to reintegration assistance and rehabilitation.

The United States has a similar agency called the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This was organized after the disastrous Hurricane *Katrina* that hit the southern states of the United States of America in 2005.

Obviously, because of the gargantuan task at hand, they also screwed up in their efforts to help their people at that time.

The Department of Disaster Resilience will take on the functions of the Office of Civil Defense, the Climate Change Office of the Climate Change Commission, the Geo-Hazard Assessment and Engineering Geology Section of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the DENR, the Health Emergency Management Bureau of the Department of Health, the Disaster Response Assistance and Management Bureau of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Bureau of Fire Protection, and the Program Management Office for Earthquake Resiliency of the Greater Metro Manila Area. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) and the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) will also be attached to the agency. By having this Department of Disaster Resilience, our people will easily know where to go or the go-to agency in times of calamities responsible in providing assistance and guidance to them.

Given how many natural disasters hit the nation every year, it is absolutely necessary for us to bring disaster resilience up to the level of the Cabinet. That is why we need the Department of Disaster Resilience now more than ever.

Imagine, in a span of 20 days, we were hit by three different calamities—earthquake, typhoon and volcano. And with this department, we will be able to finally formulate a National Disaster Resilience Framework, a National Disaster Resilience Plan, and a National Continuity Policy.

The creation of the Department of Disaster Resilience will also emphasize the need to preempt disasters and not just respond to them. If we want to face these disasters head-on, it may be equally important to revisit just how our buildings and structures are designed and how they are built; if the existing structures are designed for different types of disasters; and how our cities and communities are planned and developed.

With the Department of Disaster Resilience, we can truly begin to develop the same design and development studies here as in the area of the San Andreas Fault in the United States which will essentially be our updating of the 43-year-old National Building Code as well as the geohazard mapping of our country.

And I would like to put on record, one of our directors of the Red Cross, Dir. Rey Punongbayan who was the head of PHIVOLCS at that time and a dear friend of Senator Gordon who was a high ranking member of the Red Cross board, died when his helicopter crashed because he was helping the government in the geohazard mapping of Benguet and the Cordilleras. So, we really have to update our building code and create our geo-hazard mapping of the whole country.

Finally, it costs to be reactive in our approach to natural disasters. We lose money; worse yet, we lose lives. As such, I really believe that it is time to strengthen our disaster management system and establish a Department of Disaster Resilience. I enjoin my colleagues to see the passage of a Department of Disaster Resilience bill. And we truly ask for the support of this Body.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE

Upon his motion, there being no objection, the Chair referred Senator Zubiri's privilege speech to the Committee on National Defense and Security,

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Peace, Unification and Reconciliation without prejudice to interpellations later.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR RECTO

Likewise availing himself of the privilege hour, Senator Recto delivered the following speech:

BANGON BATANGAS!

Ang sabi nila, ang Bulkang Taal daw ay ang puso at pusod ng Batangas. And that umbilical cord has not been cut off.

No other force, nature or nurture, has shaped Batangas history more than this “riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma,” or make that inside a magma.

It has altered our landscape. What man can put together, Taal can put asunder. The present location of Tanauan, Batangas is its third. Where Bauan is today, is actually its third. And Lipa is on its fifth settlement.

Now, it can be told: Batangueños pioneered the Build Back Better scheme.

Eruptions changed the color of the landscape temporarily, but permanently, they can alter the contours of the land. *Kung hindi kinain ng lawa, tinabunan ng abo.* One bustling town, Sala, was never seen again.

Taal also defined the Batangueño character. From it, we probably got our volcanic temper, a tongue as sharp as a *balisong* forged in volcanic silica, and the art of keeping a romance as hot as a red lava.

Living constantly in the line of fire has made us resilient, adaptive, innovative, fatalistic, and even brave. We have no windmills to tilt, but in Taal, we have a more formidable fate and foe to tempt. This dwarf volcano makes all our enemies Lilliputian.

So, we fought the Spanish — one ray of the sun in our flag honors our forebears, from Mabini who was the brains of the revolution, to the thousands who shed blood for freedom.

When the Americans came, it became Ground Zero of resistance that what they did in Vietnam half a century later was first tried in the towns that ring Taal. It was also opposition country during Martial Law.

Pero kapag nag-alburuto si Taal, walang matapang na Batangueño.

So, when Taal began acting up two Sundays ago, Batangueños living in its shadows read the signs and knew what to do. They self-evacuated. Living in the mouth of the beast

have made them best early warning device.

And they fled, in minutes, thousands of them, on boats and other transport, without a single loss of life.

Batangueño chivalry made sure that women, elderly, and children boarded first. Batangueño hospitality made sure that not one of the hundreds of tourists on the island will be hurt. Batangueño men launched the flotilla of boats as if they were veterans of Dunkirk. The boats would return later to rescue the animals left behind to redeem the tearful promise of “I shall return” that was whispered to them by their humans.

Maliit man daw ang Taal, ang abo naman nito ay nakakapuwing, and so it did.

Its January 12 eruption was short by Taal standards, a burp, when compared to its 1754 cataclysmic behavior, when it vomited ash and lava for almost seven months.

Yet, it was able to displace half a million people, a hundred thousand families. Can you imagine that?

A little less than 200,000 today are in roughly 500 evacuation centers, turned 11 towns into “no-go zones,” halted activity in the Tagaytay Ridge which is the most visited tourist area in the Philippines.

The fallout extended farther and upward. Metro Manila schools and offices closed for days and shut down NAIA and Clark, marooning hundreds of thousands of passengers in 643 flights cancelled.

Farms whose soil was made rich by past volcanic eruptions took a beating as well. And so are the waters from which the best tasting *tawilis, maliputo, tilapia, and bangus* are farmed and fished.

The DA pegged an initial estimate of three billion peso bill in crops and animals lost. Even the bean counters in government were able to tally the P1.35 billion lost to *kapeng barako* farms by Taal’s toxic brew.

This toll of misery and Taal is not having a blast yet, because still buried in its bowels is the force of hundreds of Hiroshimas.

The resilience of the Batangueños and their fellow classmates in the revolution and neighbors around Taal—the people of Cavite, Laguna and Quezon—in the face of the eruptions have been romanticized in viral memes, witty poems, and moving songs that only Batangueños could weave together.

So are the continuing heartfelt response of Filipinos from Batanes to Tawi-Tawi, and from



every time zone in the world. They are so earnest and endless, this human pipeline of help, that they have left many macho Batangas men to tears.

This compassion is as thick as Taal's ashfall. And what makes them truly human is that most of donations poured in anonymously, and we know that kindness without credit is the most sublime.

Mula po sa kaibuturan ng aming puso, maraming, maraming salamat po.

But citizen resilience should not stand as a substitute for government response. Whatever the disaster is, the toughness of survivors does not excuse government from showing total care.

I will later describe the hows of possible government response, but let me first tell you the whys.

The electricity we use in this building was most probably dispatched from Batangas. Base plants in the province supply half of Luzon's power supply.

Some of the steel bars and sheets and cement being used by the construction around us originate from Batangas, too.

Most of the cars in showrooms that dot our neighborhood rolled off from Batangas port. And so are visitors from MIMAROPA shopping in the malls nearby.

Speaking of vehicles, many of their parts, together with many export items, are made in the manufacturing corridor in the Batangas gateway.

The *tilapia* and *bangus* grilled in the riverside row of eateries a stone's throw from here probably came from Taal Lake. So are the pineapple in the hotel buffet tables, the coffee beans that baristas brew.

The Filipiniana store *balikbayans* love to visit in our neighboring mall showcases Batangas made products whose name begins with B—*balisong*, *burdang Taal*, *bagoong*, *barakong kape*, *buko pie*, at *marami pang iba*.

Near it are travel shops that package tours to another B which dot Batangas—beaches—because its coastline is abundant in Vitamin Sea.

Ano man ang type ninyo sa pagkaluto ng itlog ninyo—poached, fried or scrambled—*ang itlog na iyan ay tiyak galing Batangas*.

And for smokers who cough up taxes and for alcohol-proof drinkers who leave a hefty tip to the BIR whenever they ordered their favorite drink, many of these sin products are also made in Batangas.

But Batangas is just one cog in the economic powerhouse that is Calabarzon, the

highest GDP contributor, next to Metro Manila.

The provinces affected by Taal eruption—Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Quezon—are some sort of a mini-European Union, four provinces linked by commerce.

As an example, a Batangueno may live in Batangas, works in Laguna, and shops in Cavite. Or a Cavite family has business in Batangas but sends their kid to college in Laguna. Or a Laguna family has a farm in Batangas and a small business in Cavite.

So while a factory in Laguna may remain unscathed by volcanic ash, it is as if it was dealt a direct blow if many of its Batangueno employees cannot report for work because their homes have been affected by the eruption.

The same is true with Tagaytay establishments, as many of their workers are residents of the lakeshore towns below.

The reality is factories are not like driverless-cars that can navigate on their own, and orders are not taken by robots in restaurants. When the workforce is displaced, the workplace is, too.

Kung Batangueno ka, malamang may kamag-anak ka sa Cavite, Laguna at Quezon na sila ngayong kumukukkop sa mga daang libong bakwit.

At gusto kong espesyal na pasalamatan ang mga taga-Laguna at mga Kabitenyo, mga taga-Quezon. For this is true: Many evacuees have been taken in by private homes in Cavite, Laguna and in Quezon.

This makes the radius of the desolation—and help—wider. In plotting the coordinates of assistance, including the other provinces is a must.

May kasabihan ito sa Batangas: Ang sakit ng kalingkingan, dama ng buong katawan.

Harinawa'y tapos na ang pag-alburuto ni Taal. Sapagkat ang kirot nito ay dama ng buong sambayanan.

Ika nga sa isang liham ng isang kabataang na nagsusumamo kay Taal:

"Kamusta na ga, ikaw ga e galit pa din? Kalma na ikaw, nasisira na ang iyong ganda pag ikaw e gay-an. Tahan na, nang kami'y makabangon na. At nang ikaw e bumalik na ulet sa iyong ganda."

Pero kahit mag-The End pa ang pyrotechnic show ni Taal, malaking trabaho ang ating kinakaharap. The hard work is after the dust has settled — houses to be rebuilt, schools to be repaired, streets to be cleaned and those with cracks to be replaced, animal farms to



be restocked, orchards to be rehabilitated, livelihood to be resurrected, interrupted business to be started again.

And if there are areas that need to be placed under prolonged danger zone, the hard work of resettling their residents, not to mere dumping grounds of Taal refuse, but to places where they can earn a living.

The latter is important because the benchmark of resettlement is that displaced people must not be deprived of dignity.

Taal's waking up is a wakeup call for all of us. Protocols have to be dusted up from how NAIA can cope with a shutdown, to the need for more evacuation facilities in a region crammed with people, in a country prone to calamity.

The people affected by this calamity deserve help for they have religiously amortized their volcanic eruption insurance over the years through the taxes they pay from their businesses, trade and jobs.

Also chipping in are the remittances from Batangueño workers abroad, from Japan to Jamaica, from Italy to Iceland, from UAE to USA. Those who speak with "ala eh" accent form the biggest subset of the Filipino Diaspora.

Until Taal quiets down, the final cost of relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction, cannot be tallied yet. But that does not immobilize us from identifying and readying the sources of assistance. And luckily, the 2020 national budget is a raft of aid that can be tapped. To name a few, there is a calamity fund; there are other funds in the budget which can be frontloaded so that their use will not only help in rebuilding lives, livelihood and infrastructure, but generate local jobs and stimulate the local economy as well.

The best form of relief does not come in grocery bags, but in fund infusion that will give work to the people. The Batangueño people are ready with their sweat equity.

For example, while the fishermen of Taal are thankful for the donation of canned sardines, what they actually look forward to is the normalcy to fish for freshwater sardines called *tawilis*.

It is also time for government to accelerate and advance the grant of welfare assistance—from 4Ps, senior pension, sustainable livelihood program, shelter assistance, supplementary feeding program, protective services for individuals in difficult circumstances, etc. *Kung ano ang para sa buong taon, puwedeng ibigay na rin.*

There are off-budget items that can be tapped as well.

Iyong bilyun-bilyong travel tax na matagal nang binuro, i-ayuda na sa mga nasa industriya ng turismo sa Taal at palibot nito, at unahin ang mga nasa laylayan ng lawa, iyong mga bangkero at mga may-ari ng kabayo sa isla.

Isa pang binagoong na pondo which can be tapped for Taal rehabilitation is the MVUC fund which stands at P46.25 billion.

I have also filed a bill today, for consideration of the administration, establishing the Taal Reconstruction Commission so that rehabilitation is done in an organized, programmed, predictable, transparent, inter-agency manner, with the robust participation of local governments, civil society and the private sector.

Why do we have to prepare early? Because we do not wait for our neighbor's house to be on fire before we post bidding notices for a water hose.

I also believe, based on our history, that it is only through a chartered one-stop-shop government body that the rehabilitation of a devastated land can be successful. If many of our calamity areas are dotted with the carcasses of failed, delayed, and unneeded projects, it is because the approach in rebuilding has been scattered and sporadic.

Sa mahabang kasaysayan nito, maraming unos ang dinaanan o dinanas at nalampasan ng Batangueño.

Ang pagsabog ng Taal ay bahagi lamang ng mga pagsubok. Kung gaano kasigurado ang pagdating ng trahedyo, ganoon din ang aming pagbangon. Itaga ninyo sa bato: Babangon ang Batangas.

Ang nakakatuba lamang ng puso at nakakapawi ng lungkot ay anumang hirap ang pinapasam namin ngayon, napapagaan sa pagdating ng tulong ng aming mga kababayan, at tulong ninyong lahat.

Halos buong sambayanan ang umaalalay sa amin. Pinawi ninyo ang aming uhaw, binigyan ninyo kami ng saplot, nilatagan ng mahihigaan, ipinagluto ng pagkain, binigyan ng gamot, pati aming mga hayop ay inaruga ninyo, binuksan ang inyong mga bahay at inilikas kami sa ligtas na lugar.

Kung gaano kakapal ang abo, ganoon din ang kuwento ng tapang at dalamhati na aming nararamdamman.

Sumuong kayo sa panganib, hindi alintana ang pagod, makapiling lamang kami sa aming oras ng pangangailangan.



Wala na kaming masasabi kung hindi maraming, maraming, maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat.

Bilang pagtatapos, let me share with you some questions the evacuees ask of me, lalo na doon sa mga bayang sobrang naapektuhan ng Taal. Sabi nila, "Sir, pagkatapos nito ano na? Paano na kami? Wala na kaming babalikang bahay at kabuhayan. Lahat ng pinaghirapan at pinundar namin, naglahong parang bula." Back to zero daw sila.

Ang sagot ko sa kanila, "Huwag kayong mag-alala. Hindi namin kayo pababayaan." Tulad ko, alam kong hindi ninyo rin sila pababayaan.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of Senator Recto to the Committee on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR GORDON

Relative to the Taal volcano eruption, Senator Gordon observed that the Filipinos never really learn from every disaster that hits the country. He said that the solution to a disaster is good leadership and organized people who are ready to help and assist right away, similar to the practice of the Philippine Red Cross.

Underscoring the importance of 4Ps—Predict, Plan, Prepare, and Practice, Senator Gordon said that the people should first identify the major challenges in disaster management; for instance, communities beside a river should anticipate flooding; those situated near mountains should predict landslides; and populations residing beside the ocean should foresee the occurrence of tsunami. As regards communities near a volcano which disgorges so much ash, he said that the solution is to design A-frame houses like those in Switzerland where snow would simply slide off the roof.

Citing the disaster brought about by the Mt. Pinatubo eruption where the lahar flowed viciously along the riverbanks which houses on stilts could never withstand, he said that people must learn how to adapt and react to the stimulus or threat that might occur. Of late, he cited the mysterious virus from

China which already caused three deaths, and has gone to Japan and Thailand.

Lamenting that the common problem in the country is SARS—Severe Awareness and Responsibility Shortage, or the inability to predict the disaster scenario, he said that the 4Ps must be implemented and practiced nationwide. With the 2018 eruption of Mayon Volcano, he believed that the people, particularly those living near the volcano, must be mindful of local warnings and to timely evacuate to avoid putting the responders in harm's way.

Even as he commended the influx of donations from good-hearted groups, Senator Gordon noted that some evacuees were overfed while some were underfed. Hence, he suggested assigning health volunteers in every evacuation center to identify the specific needs of the evacuees, find out their ailments, i.e., respiratory, cardiovascular, digestive, etc., and assist them according to their need. As regards water provision, he said that instead of sending tankers to affected areas, Maynilad and Manila Water could have provided huge rubber tanks with spigots where people could get water from.

Regarding evacuation centers which were mostly gymnasiums, he warned against the use of cheap tents which could be a fire hazard. To avoid creating a "disaster within a disaster," he suggested providing fire extinguishers in every evacuation center. Also, he underscored the importance of proper hygiene to prevent the spread of infectious diseases among evacuees, and to ensure the availability of portable toilets (portalets).

As he shared the lessons of Typhoon *Haiyan*, Senator Gordon stated that a wide, multicolored simulation of the storm surge utilizing a surge wave coupling model (SuWAT) was used in about 20 provinces. Indeed, he said that the devastation was severe especially in the coastal areas of Leyte, Samar, Cebu and Bohol; in fact, an earthquake even occurred in Bohol at the time. Fortunately enough, he expressed relief that the International Red Cross community came over Tacloban City to help, and brought with them goods and a suitcase of what is needed to be done to address the disaster.

He said that when Taal erupted, the Philippine Red Cross charters in Batangas, Laguna and Rizal were already planning to check the different towns of Batangas just like how the International Red



Cross team were organized during Typhoon *Haiyan* wherein the Japanese were assigned in Cebu and other provinces; the Germans were in Leyte and Samar; the Swiss were in Palawan; and the British were in Iloilo. He said that through the Red Cross Housing Project, 80,000 red tab homes were built by the beneficiaries as the team paid for the carpenters.

Senator Gordon pointed out that the anatomy of a disaster should also include a continuity plan for businesses. Since many factories in Laguna and Batangas use precision machines, these may have been damaged by ash fall that could ultimately paralyze the business as well as upset tourism in the area. At this point, he advised businesses affected by the Taal eruption to transfer to Clark and Subic.

Furthermore, he commended the efforts of the volunteers, soldiers, policemen and coastguards who served the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

Senator Gordon noted the importance of convergence and contingency plans in disaster preparedness which, he said, he has yet to see in the country as he noted people lacking in preparation and system in such events. Amidst the mounting complaints on the distribution of relief goods that provincial officials of Batangas have been receiving, he suggested provisions for food trucks or cooking facilities as what the Red Cross did when they provided four food trucks as soup kitchens in evacuation centers of areas affected by Taal Volcano eruption. He hoped that local government units to follow the system of the Red Cross to avoid disorder in relief operations.

With schools usually being converted into evacuation centers, Senator Gordon proposed that teachers conduct night classes, to continue normalcy in children's education. He also stressed the need for government to start looking for a permanent relocation for those living in the volcano island of Taal.

To preserve life over property, Senator Gordon suggested that the LGUs use part of their calamity fund to buy the poultry and livestock of evacuees to prevent them from going back to their disaster-stricken lands just to save and retrieve the animals and to let the government retrieve their animals for them. Noting the previous years unspent P11 billion year's calamity fund, he suggested that the government maximize it and start allocating,

anticipating, and planning for possible goods and expenses that evacuees would need, such as water and blankets.

He said a big preparation that should also be considered is to look for relocation areas for residents who are still living in fault line areas. He cited the struggle of finding relocation sites for the victims of the landslide in Ginsaugon, Southern Leyte, in 2006 because most lands are in fault areas.

Senator Gordon said there is no need to create another agency or bureaucracy in addressing national disaster preparedness and that what was needed was strong leadership in their units in times of disaster.

At this point, Senator Gordon commended those affected by the Taal Volcano eruption for their resiliency; Senators Recto and Zubiri for their foresight; and the people of the provinces of Laguna, Rizal, and Cavite for adopting evacuees from Batangas province. He said the government should next address possible problems of overstaying of evacuees in their adoptive homes and devise an accountable system to provide help for those who have been displaced by providing a coupon where they could buy food that is supported by the government.

He added that the Body must make an effort to send a message of support to the NDRRMC and its local units in the provinces, to make sure of the country's preparedness and to remind them that the Senate will seriously investigate those who will take advantage of the situation brought by disasters – from selling overpriced masks, to stealing goods, and to pocketing funds meant for the relief operations.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT SOTTO

Senate President Sotto stated that as a former city vice mayor, and Senators Gatchalian, Tolentino, and Gordon who were both former mayors in their respective cities, could attest to it, he very well knew that all local government units were mandated to reserve 5% of their entire budget as calamity fund. Thus, he asked why there was a need to ask help from the private sector when LGUs have 5% of their entire budget for calamity fund. For instance, he cited the Manila City government which has a P12-billion calamity fund. He then urged the Body to look



into the calamity fund and how much fund the LGUs have for the entire country.

Senator Zubiri, for his part, explained that there are towns, however, that have very small IRA, such as the Municipality of Matanao, Davao del Sur where infrastructures were completely destroyed by the earthquake. With an IRA of about P100 million, which is already high in that area, he said that the calamity fund of only P5 million is not enough to rebuild infrastructures. But Senate President Sotto pointed out that the municipality is under a province that also has 5% mandatory reserve of its budget which could help the municipality. He clarified that what he was driving at was that the initial reaction of the LGUs must be instant because they are capable of providing assistance.

Senate President Sotto placed on record that the reason he ran for the Senate in 1992 was that when he was vice mayor, Quezon City was having a problem helping evacuees of the Mt. Pinatubo eruption. He recalled that at the time, he asked the city treasurer for funding to provide basic needs of many Kapampangan from Quezon City who were then housed in the Amoranto Stadium; however, the Commission on Audit did not allow the Quezon City government to use the calamity fund because the President has to first declare a state of calamity in the country or in the particular area before the funds could be used. He said that for that reason, there became Republic Act No. 8185 – An Act Amending Section 324 (d) of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, which he principally authored, by virtue of which the city council or municipal council, and no longer the President, can declare a state of calamity in their respective area, instantly provide help, while the national government steps in for the poorer LGUs.

Senator Zubiri agreed, but he lamented that there are provinces and cities whose 5% calamity fund is not enough because they are regularly hit by typhoons.

For his part, Senator Gordon agreed with Senator Zubiri, and he suggested that typhoon-prone LGUs that run out of calamity funds should have a prepared project list for the said calamity fund so that when they ask the national government for assistance, they should be given the privilege to ask and be granted the needed items. He said that the President, or whoever is the authority, must make a decision on the request for a calamity fund. He said that it is the

system being implemented in the Red Cross wherein a chapter in the community requests what is in their project list from the Red Cross which, in turn, gives such needs in advance.

Senator Recto placed on record that there are currently half a million evacuees in Batangas province. He said that with an estimated budget of P100 per person, the expenses for 500,000 people would amount to P50 million a day or about P1.5 billion which is enough to wipe out within the month the entire calamity fund of Batangas province. He also disclosed that PHIVOLCS is asking Batangas to prepare for the possibility of the volcano erupting within the next seven months.

Senator Recto emphasized the gravity of the situation, saying that he did not know of any time in the country's history when half a million people living within a 14-kilometer radius danger zone had to be evacuated. If three kilometres would be added to that, he said that the figure would double to one million Batangueños, which make up one-third of the province.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Chair referred the speech of Senator Gordon to the Committee on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, the session was suspended.

It was 4:41 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:19 p.m., the session was resumed.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary of the Senate read the following matters and the Chair made the corresponding referrals:

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that, on 17 December 2019, the



House of Representatives designated Representatives Salceda, Garin, Suansing, Tan, Yap, Villafuerte Jr., Duavit, Savellano, Abu, Advincula and Sy-Alvarado as conferees to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 1026, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 141, 142, 143, 144, 147, 150, 152, 263, 265, AND 288-A, AND ADDING A NEW SECTION 290-A TO REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8424, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, and

Senate Bill No. 1074, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE EXCISE TAX ON ALCOHOL PRODUCTS, HEATED TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE SECTIONS 141, 142, 143, 144, 147, 150, AND 288 OR REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8424, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

To the Archives

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that on 17 December 2019, the House of Representatives passed the following House bills, in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate:

House Bill No. 5666, entitled

AN ACT CREATING FOUR (4) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF TACLOBAN, PROVINCE OF LEYTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(I) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY

REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 5614, entitled

AN ACT CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE TENTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF VILLANUEVA, PROVINCE OF MISAMIS ORIENTAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(K) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 5615, entitled

AN ACT CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ALFONSO, PROVINCE OF CAVITE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(E) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 5616, entitled

AN ACT CREATING FOUR (4) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CALAUAG, PROVINCE OF QUEZON, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(E) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED;



House Bill No. 5617, entitled

AN ACT CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF VILLABA, PROVINCE OF LEYTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(I) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 5618, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THREE (3) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF CALAMBA, PROVINCE OF LAGUNA, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(E) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED"

House Bill No. 5657, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THREE (3) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF PARANAQUE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 27 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY RE-ORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 5658, entitled

AN ACT CREATING FOUR (4) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE

REGIONAL TRIAL COURT AND TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES IN THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF ORMOC, PROVINCE OF LEYTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 14(I) AND 29 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 5659, entitled

AN ACT CREATING TEN (10) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL REGION AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(L) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Finance

House Bill No. 5660, entitled

AN ACT CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT AND ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN NOVALICHES, QUEZON CITY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 14(D) AND 27 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED;

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House Bill No. 5661, entitled

AN ACT CREATING FIVE (5) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF MUNTINLUPA, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(D) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 5662, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THREE (3) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF GENERAL TRIAS, PROVINCE OF CAVITE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(E) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 5663, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THREE (3) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE NINTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF DAPITAN, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(J) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 5664, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THREE (3) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE

REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CATANAUAN, PROVINCE OF QUEZON, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(E) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 5665, entitled

AN ACT CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT AND TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES IN THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF MATI, PROVINCE OF DAVAO ORIENTAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 14(L) AND 29 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED;

House Bill No. 5667, entitled

AN ACT CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF BACOLOD AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 29 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED; and

House Bill No. 5668, entitled

AN ACT CREATING ONE (1) ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE TENTH JUDICIAL REGION TO BE

STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF QUEZON, PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(K) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980," AS AMENDED

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Finance

House Bill No. 5579, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTERS IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF MAGDIWANG IN SIBUYAN ISLAND, AND ODIONGAN IN TABLAS ISLAND, PROVINCE OF ROMBLON, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

To the Committees on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Finance

House Bill No. 5580, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN BARANGAY CAMAMAN-AN, CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY, TO BE KNOWN AS THE CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY TESDA TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

To the Committees on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Finance

House Bill No. 2582, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE LYING-IN CLINIC IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF RIZAL, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN FROM TEN (10) BEDS TO TWENTY (20) BEDS, UPGRADING ITS SERVICE FACILITIES AND PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS MEDICAL PERSONNEL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

House Bill No. 1799, entitled

AN ACT RENAMING THE TALISAY DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN TALISAY CITY, PROVINCE OF CEBU, INTO CEBU SOUTH MEDICAL CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7799, ENTITLED "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF TALISAY, PROVINCE OF CEBU, TO BE KNOWN AS THE TALISAY DISTRICT HOSPITAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR"

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

House Bill No. 831, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF BICOL MEDICAL CENTER IN NAGA CITY, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR FROM FIVE HUNDRED (500) BEDS TO ONE THOUSAND (1000) BEDS, UPGRADING ITS SERVICE FACILITIES AND PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES, AUTHORIZING THE INCREASE OF ITS MEDICAL WORKFORCE COMPLEMENT, AMENDING FOR THE

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PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8053,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

House Bill No. 2444, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PAMPLONA IN THE PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR, TO BE KNOWN AS THE BICOL WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

House Bill No. 5643, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING THE CAGAYAN DE ORO RIVER AND ITS IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS LOCATED IN CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY, PROVINCE OF MISAMIS ORIENTAL A CULTURAL HERITAGE ZONE

To the Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture

House Bill No. 5644, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING THE CITY OF CARCAR IN THE PROVINCE OF CEBU A CULTURAL HERITAGE ZONE

To the Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture

House Bill No. 5682, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING JUNE 21 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN TAGAYTAY CITY, PROVINCE OF CAVITE IN COMMEMORATION OF ITS FOUNDATION DAY TO BE KNOWN AS "CHARTER DAY OF

TAGAYTAY CITY" OR "ARAW NG LUNGSOD NG TAGAYTAY," AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10775

To the Committee on Local Government

House Bill No. 5692, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING JUNE 15 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF PAMPANGA TO BE KNOWN AS THE "MT. PINATUBO MEMORIAL DAY"

To the Committee on Local Government

House Bill No. 5697, entitled

AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BICOL UNIVERSITY (BU) — EAST CAMPUS PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SCHOOL FACILITIES INSIDE THE BU-EAST CAMPUS

To the Committees on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; and Finance; and

House Bill No. 5698, entitled

AN ACT RENAMING THE MARIANO MARCOS STATE UNIVERSITY (MMSU) IN THE CITY OF BATAC, ILOCOS NORTE AS THE FERDINAND E. MARCOS STATE UNIVERSITY (FEMSU), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1279, ENTITLED "MERGING THE MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND NORTHERN LUZON STATE COLLEGE INTO A STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE MARIANO MARCOS STATE UNIVERSITY, TRANSFERRING THE COLLEGE LEVEL COURSES OF ILOCOS NORTE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE AND ILOCOS NORTE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TRADES

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INTO SAID UNIVERSITY, PROVIDING A CHARTER FOR THE PURPOSE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

To the Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that, on 18 December 2019, the House of Representatives passed House Bill No. 5712, entitled

AN ACT MODIFYING THE SALARY SCHEDULE FOR CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL AND AUTHORIZING THE GRANT OF ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,

in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

To the Archives

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 1247, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING AND PROTECTING THE LAND OWNERSHIP OF DEPED SCHOOL-SITES, MANDATING THE SUMMARY TITLING OF UNREGISTERED REAL PROPERTIES USED AS PUBLIC SCHOOL SITES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Lacson

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; Basic Education, Arts and Culture; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1248, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR THE USE, POSSESSION, SALE, OR DISTRIBUTION TO MINORS OF ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship

RESOLUTION

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 283, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO INQUIRE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE ALLEGED ABUSE AND POOR SERVICE OF GRAB PH AND ITS EFFECTIVE MONOPOLY OF RIDE-HAILING SERVICES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committee on Public Services

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Letter from the House of Representatives, informing the Senate that, on 18 December 2019, the House of Representatives ratified the Conference Committee Report on the disagreeing provisions of House Bill No. 1026, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 141, 142, 143, 144, 147, 150, 152, 263, 265, AND 288-A, AND ADDING A NEW SECTION 290-A TO REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8424, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, and

Senate Bill No. 1074, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 109, 141, 142, 143, 144, 147, 263, 263-A, 265, AND 288-A, OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8424, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

To the Archives

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BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 1249, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING HAZARD PAY TO REGIONAL TRIAL COURT JUDGES DURING THEIR INCUMBENCY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1250, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND CRISIS CENTERS FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN EVERY PROVINCE AND CITY OF THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality; Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1251, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING COMPENSATION TO SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN OFFICIALS FURTHER AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10742, ENTITLED “SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN REFORM ACT OF 2015”

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committees on Local Government; Youth; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1252, entitled

AN ACT REGULATING THE PLANNING, DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, OCCUPANCY, AND MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS, PROMOTING BUILDING RESILIENCE

VERSUS FIRE, FLOOD, STORM, EARTHQUAKE AND MULTIPLE HAZARDS, ENACTING A NEW PHILIPPINE BUILDING ACT, THEREBY REPEALING PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1096, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Go

To the Committees on Public Works; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1253, entitled

AN ACT CREATING ADDITIONAL DIVISIONS IN THE COURT OF APPEALS, INCREASING THE NUMBER OF COURT OF APPEALS JUSTICES FROM SIXTY-NINE (69) TO SEVENTY-EIGHT (78), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG 129, AS AMENDED OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Go

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1254, entitled

AN ACT CREATING ONE ADDITIONAL DIVISION IN THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS COMMISSION, INCREASING THE NUMBER OF COMMISSIONERS FROM FOUR-TEEN (14) TO SEVENTEEN (17), AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Go

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Finance

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Senate Bill No. 1255, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE JUDICIAL MARSHAL SERVICE DEFINING ITS FUNCTIONS AND POWERS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Sotto III

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1256, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AS THE INDEPENDENT ECONOMIC AND PLANNING AGENCY OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT, DEFINING ITS FUNCTIONS AND AMENDING EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 230 SERIES OF 1987, AS AMENDED, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committees on Economic Affairs; Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1257, entitled

AN ACT FURTHER AMENDING COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 146, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committees on Public Services; Economic Affairs; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1258, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING STRONGER PROTECTION TO CHILDREN BY INCREASING THE AGE FOR

DETERMINING STATUTORY RAPE AND OTHER ACTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION AND AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE ACT NO. 3815, AS AMENDED, ALSO KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8353, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ANTI-RAPE LAW OF 1997 AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7610, ALSO KNOWN AS THE SPECIAL PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST ABUSE, EXPLOITATION AND DISCRIMINATORY ACT

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality

Senate Bill No. 1259, entitled

AN ACT CREATING NEW POSITIONS FOR THE TEACHING PERSONNEL IN THE PUBLIC BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEM, REVISING THE QUALIFICATION STANDARDS THEREOF AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1260, entitled

AN ACT FURTHER INCREASING THE MAXIMUM DEPOSIT INSURANCE COVERAGE, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 3591, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION (PDIC) CHARTER

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies; and Government Corporations and Public Enterprises

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Senate Bill No. 1261, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE SCOPE AND PROCEDURE FOR PHILIPPINE SHIP REGISTRY, RECOGNITION AND ENFORCEMENT OF MARITIME CLAIMS, AND LIMITATION OF LIABILITY, AS WELL AS PROVIDING ESSENTIAL INCENTIVES, TO PROMOTE A COMPREHENSIVE AND ORDERLY PHILIPPINE SHIP REGISTRY SYSTEM FOR THE REGULATION OF VESSELS CARRYING THE FLAG STATE

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Public Services; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 1262, entitled

AN ACT ALLOWING AND REGULATING THE USE OF MOTORCYCLES AS PUBLIC UTILITY VEHICLES, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4136, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LAND TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC CODE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Public Services; and Local Government

Senate Bill No. 1263, entitled

AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF THE AGRICULTURE PROFESSION IN THE PHILIPPINES, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE A PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD FOR AGRICULTURISTS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Finance

RESOLUTIONS

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 284, entitled

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING JAMIE CHRISTINE BERBERABE LIM FOR WINNING THE GOLD MEDAL IN THE WOMEN'S KARATEDO 61 KILOGRAM CATEGORY AT THE 30th SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES

Introduced by Senator Binay

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 285, entitled

RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING ALL THE FILIPINO MEDALIST OF THE 30th SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES FOR BRINGING PRIDE AND HONOR TO THE COUNTRY

Introduced by Senator Angara

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 286, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE GOVERNMENT'S MIGRATION POLICIES ON PROMOTING THE WELFARE AND RIGHTS OF FILIPINO MIGRANT WORKERS AMIDST THE INCREASING INCIDENCE OF ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS AND ESCALATING SECURITY TENSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Foreign Relations



ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Chair declared the session adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of the following day.

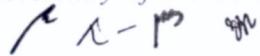
It was 5:35 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.



ATTY. MYRA MARIE D. VILLARICA

Secretary of the Senate



Approved on January 21, 2020