



**REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
Senate  
Pasay City**

# **Journal 1**

**SESSION NO. 77  
Wednesday, May 3, 2017**

**SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS  
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

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Wednesday, May 3, 2017

**CALL TO ORDER**

At 3:14 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, called the session to order.

**SILENT PRAYER**

The Body observed a minute of silent prayer.

**ROLL CALL**

Upon direction of the Senate President, the Secretary of the Senate, Atty. Lutgardo B. Barbo, called the roll, to which the following senators responded:

Aquino, P. B. IV B.	Pacquiao, E. M. D.
Binay, M. L. N. S.	Pangilinan, F. N.
Drilon, F. M.	Poe, G.
Ejercito, J. V. G.	Pimentel III, A. K.
Escudero, F. J. G.	Recto, R. G.
Gatchalian, W.	Sotto III, V. C.
Honasan, G. B.	Villanueva, J.
Hontiveros, R.	Villar, C. A.
Lacson, P. M.	Zubiri, J. M. F.

With 18 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senators Legarda and Trillanes arrived after the roll call.

Senator Cayetano was on official business as indicated in the May 3, 2017 letter of the Senator's chief of staff.

Senator Angara was in Jakarta, Indonesia on official mission "to attend a film presentation concerning the welfare and protection of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)," as indicated in the May 3, 2017 letter of the Senator's chief of staff.

Senator Gordon was in Switzerland on official mission "to attend the 35<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing Board of the International Federation of the Red Cross."

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

**MOTION TO APPROVE JOURNAL  
OF 76<sup>TH</sup> SESSION**

Thereafter, Senator Sotto moved to dispense with the reading of the *Journal* of May 2, 2017 (76<sup>th</sup> Session) and considered it approved.

At this juncture, Senator Drilon manifested that there was a typographical error on the second

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column, third line from the bottom of page 1302, where his name was misspelled.

He also noted that the *Journal* did not reflect the approval of his motion that the amendments by substitution that he submitted to Senate Bill No. 1280 be considered approved without prejudice to the other Members introducing their respective individual amendments thereto, if any.

### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, the session was suspended.

*It was 3:17 p.m.*

### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

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

Upon resumption, Senator Sotto said that Senator Drilon's motion for the approval of his amendment by substitution to Senate Bill No. 1280 was reflected on page 1359 of the *Journal*.

### APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL OF SESSION NO. 76 AS CORRECTED

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the Journal of Session No. 76 (May 2, 2017) and considered it approved, subject to the manifestation of Senator Drilon to correct the spelling of his name on page 1302.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

Senator Sotto acknowledged the presence in the gallery of the following guests:

- Officials of Barangay Maribago, Lapu-Lapu City, namely, Councilors Arvin Abing, Cesaria Ompad, Eddie Daño, Rosalino Abing, Melody Paquibot and Aniceta Paquibot, Treasurer Ponciana Sollano and Secretary Lani Pangatuan;
- Most Reverend Broderick Pabillo, Auxiliary Bishop of Manila, together with Dr. Ma. Julieta Wasan, executive vice president of LAIKO, and LAIKO members Rosarita Mariano Balintan and Grace Ceniza;
- Melissa Macapamban, president of the Catholic Women's League;

- Youth leaders from the UP Practice of Administrative Leadership and Service led by Nicole Parreno; the UP *Samahan Tungo sa Progresibong Administrasyon*, represented by Kenneth Dingal;
- Amnesty International represented by Wilnor Papa; and
- Mayor Nathalie Ann Debuque of Anilao, Iloilo with the Liga ng mga Barangay president, Ms. Lyka Debuque.

Senate President Pimentel welcomed the guests to the Senate.

### REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

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

### BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 1415, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION, SECURITY, AND BENEFITS OF WHISTLEBLOWERS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Richard J. Gordon

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1416, entitled

AN ACT TO ENCOURAGE GOOD SAMARITANS WHO PROVIDE REASONABLE ASSISTANCE IN AN EMERGENCY BY PROTECTING THEM FROM LIABILITY

Introduced by Senator Richard J. Gordon

To the Committees on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 1417, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING BASIC CITIZEN SERVICE TRAINING, ESTABLISH-

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ING THE CITIZEN SERVICE CORPS, CREATING THE CITIZEN SERVICE COMMISSION FOR THIS PURPOSE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Richard J. Gordon

**To the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; Youth; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1418, entitled

AN ACT TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERISM BY PROTECTING VOLUNTEERS FROM LIABILITY IN THE PERFORMANCE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Introduced by Senator Richard J. Gordon

**To the Committees on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Justice and Human Rights**

Senate Bill No. 1419, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR FREE IRRIGATION SERVICE AND THE CONDONATION OF BACK ACCOUNTS OR UNPAID IRRIGATION SERVICE FEES, AMORTIZATION AND EQUITY PAYMENTS OF FARMERS AND IRRIGATOR'S ASSOCIATIONS FROM THE NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION

Introduced by Senator Richard J. Gordon

**To the Committees on Agriculture and Food; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1420, entitled

AN ACT EXEMPTING THE SALE OF REAL PROPERTY IN THE EXERCISE OF THE STATE'S POWER OF EMINENT DOMAIN FROM THE PAYMENT OF CAPITAL GAINS AND DOCUMENTARY STAMP TAXES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 24 (D) AND 196 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8424,

AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997

Introduced by Senator Recto

**To the Committee on Ways and Means**

Senate Bill No. 1421, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Recto

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

Senate Bill No. 1422, entitled

AN ACT EXEMPTING THE MANUFACTURE, ASSEMBLY, CONVERSION AND IMPORTATION OF PLUG-IN HYBRID ELECTRIC VEHICLES FROM THE PAYMENT OF EXCISE TAXES AND DUTIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Recto

**To the Committees on Ways and Means; and Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship**

Senate Bill No. 1423, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE INDUSTRY PLAYERS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 23 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9184, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT REFORM ACT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Recto

**To the Committee on Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1424, entitled

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR DIABETES AND ENDOCRINOLOGY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Introduced by Senator Joel Villanueva

**To the Committees on Health and Demography; Ways and Means; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 1425, entitled

**AN ACT TO ENHANCE THE REGULATION ON EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONALS AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 40, 41, AND 42, TITLE II, BOOK I OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED OR THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES**

Introduced by Senator Joel Villanueva

**To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development**

Senate Bill No. 1426, entitled

**AN ACT WAIVING GOVERNMENT FEES AND CHARGES ON THE ISSUANCE OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED IN THE APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT OF FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKERS**

Introduced by Senator Joel Villanueva

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

Senate Bill No. 1427, entitled

**AN ACT ENHANCING WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH PROMOTION OF PRODUCTIVITY INCENTIVES AND GAINSHARING, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6971, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE**

**PRODUCTIVITY INCENTIVES ACT OF 1990**

Introduced by Senator Joel Villanueva

**To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development**

Senate Bill No. 1428, entitled

**AN ACT ALLOWING THE MONETIZATION OF MATERNITY LEAVE CREDITS OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES AND THE COVERED SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS) FEMALE MEMBERS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Introduced by Senator Sotto III

**To the Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality**

Senate Bill No. 1429, entitled

**AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 23 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9165, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE COMPREHENSIVE DANGEROUS DRUGS ACT OF 2002, ALLOWING PLEA-BARGAINING IN CERTAIN CASES**

Introduced by Senator Sotto III

**To the Committees on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs; and Justice and Human Rights**

Senate Bill No. 1430, entitled

**AN ACT DECLARING DECEMBER 8 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY TO COMMEMORATE THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY, THE PRINCIPAL PATRONESS OF THE PHILIPPINES**

Introduced by Senator Sotto III

**To the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture**

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**RESOLUTIONS**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 349, entitled

**RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT IN PROHIBITING AND ELIMINATING NUCLEAR WEAPONS AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL**

Introduced by Senator Richard J. Gordon

**To the Committee on Rules**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 350, entitled

**RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE STATE OF THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWS) CONTRIBUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS IN THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM THROUGH PHILHEALTH, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Introduced by Senator Cynthia A. Villar

**To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Health and Demography**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 351, entitled

**RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ISSUE OF “SECRET DETENTION CENTERS” WITHIN POLICE STATIONS, AND ALLEGATIONS OF EXTORTION AND TORTURE AGAINST DETAINEES BY MEMBERS OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP)**

Introduced by Senator Risa Hontiveros

**To the Committees on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs; and Justice and Human Rights**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 352, entitled

**RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND DANGEROUS DRUGS AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE RECENTLY DISCOVERED “SECRET” CELL CONTAINING TWELVE (12) DETAINEES IN POLICE STATION NO. 1, AT RAXABAGO, TONDO, MANILA, AS UNCOVERED BY THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (CHR), WITH THE END IN VIEW OF PREVENTING MEMBERS OF PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP) AND OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES FROM USING THEIR AUTHORITY, TRAINING AND POSITION TO COMMIT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND OTHER ABUSES UNDER THE GUISE OF IMPLEMENTING THE ADMINISTRATION’S WAR ON DRUGS**

Introduced by Senator Trillanes IV

**To the Committees on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs; and Justice and Human Rights**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 353, entitled

**RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND DANGEROUS DRUGS AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGED SYSTEMATIC PROBLEM PLAGUING THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP) IN CONNECTION WITH THE ADMINISTRATION’S WAR ON DRUGS, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE TESTIMONIES OF SEVERAL WITNESSES AND A POLICE OFFICER TAGGING MEMBERS OF THE PNP IN THE PERPETUATION OF EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF COMING UP WITH REMEDIAL LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THAT**

THE WAR ON DRUGS IS NOT USED BY THE PNP AND OTHER STATE ACTORS AS LICENSE TO COMMIT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND OTHER ILLEGAL ACTS, AND THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE AND THE PEOPLE CONCERNED ARE AFFORDED THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS AND/OR THAT THEIR RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS OF LAW IS RESPECTED

Introduced by Senator Trillanes IV

**To the Committees on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs; and Justice and Human Rights**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 354, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC OFFICERS AND INVESTIGATIONS (SENATE BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE), AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ACCUSATIONS OF CHARLIE "ATONG" ANG THAT TWO CABINET OFFICIALS, NAMELY JUSTICE SECRETARY VITALIANO AGUIRRE AND NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER HERMOGENES ESPERON, AND OTHER FORMER MILITARY OFFICIALS ARE USING THEIR AGENCIES AND POSITIONS IN AN ALLEGED PLOT TO KILL HIM IN AN ATTEMPT TO TAKE OVER HIS COMPANY'S GAMBLING OPERATIONS, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ENSURING THAT PUBLIC OFFICIALS USE THE RESOURCES AND POWER OF THEIR RESPECTIVE OFFICES FOR PUBLIC INTEREST AND IN THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR DUTIES, AND THAT THEY SHOULD REFRAIN FROM DOING ACTS TO ADVANCE THEIR PERSONAL FINANCIAL INTERESTS

Introduced by Senator Trillanes IV

**To the Committee on Accountability of Public Officers and Investigations**

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 355, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED INEFFICIENT MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE METRO RAIL TRANSIT (MRT) 3 RESULTING IN INCREASING INCIDENTS OF TRAIN MALFUNCTIONS, AND THE REPORTED NEED TO EXAMINE THE NEWLY DELIVERED DALIAN TRAINS DUE TO ALLEGATIONS THAT IT WILL REMAIN UNUSABLE UNTIL 2018

Introduced by Senator Grace Poe

**To the Committee on Public Services**

**COMMITTEE REPORT**

Committee Report No. 59, prepared and submitted jointly by the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance, on Senate Bill No. 1431, with Senator Joel Villanueva as author thereof, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTING A PHILIPPINE LABOR FORCE COMPETENCIES COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAM, ESTABLISHING FREE ACCESS TO TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,

recommending its approval in substitution of Senate Bill No. 1318.

Sponsor: Senator Joel Villanueva

**To the Calendar for Ordinary Business**

**PRIVILEGE SPEECH  
OF SENATOR LEGARDA**

Availing herself of the privilege hour, Senator Legarda spoke on the recently concluded 60<sup>th</sup> Palarong

Pambansa which was held in her home province, Antique, thanked everyone involved in this very important sports event, and committed her continuing support for sports development in the country.

*Following is the full text of Senator Legarda's privilege speech:*

The 60<sup>th</sup> Palarong Pambansa recently concluded in my home province, Antique, and I stand here today to express my gratitude to everyone involved and to commit my continuing support for sports development in our country. Perhaps, I am the most unlikely person to stand here for sports development—as we know Senator Pacquiao, Sen. Sonny Angara, maybe even Senator Sotto, would be the sports aficionados and I would be the last one. But since it was hosted very unlikely in the province of Antique, I stand here to thank all of those responsible.

I wish to congratulate all the participants — from the winning region, the National Capital Region, and all the student-athletes from all regions. It was a proud moment for me to see our young, talented athletes gathered in my home province.

I would like to thank President Rodrigo Duterte for gracing the opening ceremony. I did not expect him to come with his wife Honeylet and his daughter on a Sunday afternoon despite his busy schedule and in the weekend before the ASEAN Summit. His presence was greatly appreciated by the Antiqueños, but more by the student-athletes who felt that sports development is a priority of government.

I also wish to thank the Department of Education (DepEd) led by Secretary Leonor Briones who was there and Assistant Secretary Tonisito Umali who is the secretary-general of the Palarong Pambansa, as well as Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) Chairperson William “Butch” Ramirez, for their support for Antique in staging this very important sports event.

Asec Umali said that the DepEd is developing a roadmap that would “build champions” through regular trainings of student-athletes, provision of assistance from the PSC, and the establishment of varsity systems in public schools.

We need to develop sports and encourage the youth to be involved in sports and other extracurricular activities for their holistic development and also as a way to keep the youth off drugs and other vices.

Finally, I congratulate Gov. Rhodora Cadio, Vice Governor Edgar Denosta, the local officials and employees, and my fellow Antiqueños. I am very proud of them. Through their diligence, cooperation and sense of duty, our humble but beautiful and historic province was able to host the Palaro ng Pambansa.

Antique’s hosting of the Palarong Pambansa proves that even a small province can stage a big national event with the support and cooperation of all agencies and sectors concerned. With passion, hardwork and creativity, we can accomplish great things.

In fact, the use of homestays to accommodate some of the delegates and their companions provided a unique experience as it allowed better interaction between the guests and the Antiqueños, with some building friendships and even exchanging recipes.

It was a Region X DepEd official who came to me and said that in the beginning they were reluctant to go or even support it because Antique did not have five-star hotels. But he said he was so grateful that it was held in Antique because the homestay and the bed-and-breakfast experience in the seven towns which hosted the Palarong Pambansa turned out to be a very gratifying experience. They did not only showcase sports development but also their arts and crafts. In Patnongan where I went, there was a trade fair of arts and crafts and even the food of Region X. And clearly, we saw an exchange of expertise and exchange of culture between and among our regions.

Camaraderie was built not only inside the sporting venues among the student-athletes, but also within the province between guests and hosts.

The Palaro also gave Antique the opportunity to showcase tourism. Guests felt the warm Antiqueño hospitality and were amazed with the natural beauty of our province. This is why we must preserve our natural treasures which provide us with positive energy that allow us to be more productive and inspired.

It was also a venue to showcase arts and culture. DepEd Region X, just like other regions, organized the inauguration of a friendship marker between the Province of Northern Mindanao and Antique and set up an exhibit of traditional crafts which allowed them to share with other regions their culture and creativity.

This is the true value of the Palarong Pambansa. It is not only geared towards sports development but also serves as a venue for

instilling the values of self-discipline, respect for law and order, sportsmanship and camaraderie. It is an avenue to showcase the beauty of our provinces, the strength of our people, and the unity among our citizens.

And, lastly, I think that the choice of Antique as a venue for our Palarong Pambansa shows the social inclusion in terms of selecting the area which would host the Palaro. With that, I thank you also, Senator Drilon, our Minority Leader, for being the closing guest of honor of our Palarong Pambansa. And, perhaps soon, Antique can rival, can be at parity with what Senator Drilon has done for Iloilo.

So, with that, congratulations to everyone involved in the 60<sup>th</sup> Palarong Pambansa.

#### **MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA**

Senator Villanueva congratulated Senator Legarda and the entire province of Antique for successfully hosting the 60<sup>th</sup> Palarong Pambansa. He also congratulated the country's student-athletes, for whom he has so much respect, for participating in the year's Palarong Pambansa.

Senator Villanueva stated that joining the Palarong Pambansa is not an easy feat and he recalled his experience as a student-athlete in the 1992 Palarong Pambansa in Zamboanga City who, like the other student-athletes from all over the country, went through different struggles just to be given the opportunity to represent their respective schools and provinces.

Senator Villanueva said that to the country's student-athletes, joining the Palarong Pambansa is priceless as it serves to open several doors of opportunities for them, especially for young Filipinos with great potentials, to make it big both in the national and global arena. He said that he was most grateful to the Palarong Pambansa because it gave him the opportunity to be an athletic scholar while in college. He stated that student-athletes have a unique struggle that requires them to balance the responsibility of training on a regular basis while having to accomplish their academic duties at the same time.

Senator Villanueva stated that the Palarong Pambansa serves as a platform to recognize the efforts made by the young athletes, but going beyond extending the recognition that they deserve,

they must, at the same time, be supported more. It was in this context, he said, that he filed Senate Bill No. 1194, or the Magna Carta of Student-Athletes, to protect and strengthen the student-athletes' rights and provide them with the support they need to achieve their fullest athletic potentials.

He then thanked Senator Escudero, chairman of the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture, for giving immediate attention to his proposal and for including his measure in that morning's committee hearing. He then asked the Members of the Body to support the immediate passage of the Senate Bill No. 1341.

#### **REFERRAL OF SPEECH AND MANIFESTATION TO COMMITTEES**

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of Senator Legarda and the manifestation of Senator Villanueva to the Committees on Sports, and Education, Arts and Culture.

#### **SPECIAL ORDER**

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Body approved the transfer of Committee Report No. 59 on Senate Bill No. 1431 from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 59 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1431**

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Second Reading, Senate Bill No. 1431 (Committee Report No. 59), entitled

#### **AN ACT INSTITUTING A PHILIPPINE LABOR FORCE COMPETENCIES COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAM, ESTABLISHING FREE ACCESS TO TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the Rules of the Senate, with the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Sotto, only the title of the bill was read without prejudice to the insertion of its full text into the Record of the Senate.

The Chair recognized Senator Villanueva for the sponsorship.

## SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR VILLANUEVA

Senator Villanueva presented to the Body for plenary consideration Senate Bill No. 1431 under Committee Report No. 59, entitled "An Act Instituting a Philippine Labor Force Competencies Competitiveness Program, Establishing Free Access to Technical and Vocational Training Programs and for Other Purposes" or the "Tulong-Trabaho Act of 2017."

*Following is the full text of Senator Villanueva's sponsorship speech:*

### **PONDO SA PAGLIKHA NG TRABAHO, PONDO NG MANGGAGAWANG PILIPINO**

Let me tell the Body a story. Back in 2012, I asked my staff at TESDA to organize a nationwide "Blogging Contest." For the blogging theme we chose "SA TESDA, MAY CHOICE KA."

Our goal: spread the idea that tech-voc graduates can have a better chance in landing jobs and address job-skills mismatch and that a career in tech-voc can actually lead to a better future. And in just two weeks, we received around 50 blog entries which emphasized that tech-voc is really the way to go.

One of the blog entries that enlightened and motivated this Representation came from the blog site "Chellelandia." The blogger shared the success story of Leo Enriquez and Eugene Tero, tech-voc graduates from Dumaguete City. They left the Philippines in mid-2011 as OFWs to work in a meat-processing company in Australia as butchers. Each of them receives a jaw-dropping salary equivalent to about P180,000 monthly for a four-year contract. The blogger narrated Leo's and Eugene's struggles before getting to TESDA.

Leo's work in Australia was a long way from his drug addiction days, and the painful years of trying to make ends meet for Eugene, whose parents abandoned him and his sister, a child with special needs.

The blogger also described how TESDA brought the two men together when they enrolled in a slaughtering course through TESDA's Training for Work Scholarship Program or TWSP. The course trained them on the standard

slaughtering procedures of livestock, such as flaying, brisket cutting, and evisceration.

After their graduation, Eugene and Leo honed their slaughtering skills at the Dumaguete City Slaughterhouse. To increase their chances of finding work abroad, they uploaded videos demonstrating their skills on YouTube. These YouTube posts helped them land their dream jobs in Australia. This blog entry won the "Most Creative Blog Award."

Our blogging contest proved that the idea, "TECH-VOC IS THE WAY TO GO," is worth spreading. Eventually, that idea turned into actual enrollees, graduates and more Filipinos whose lives were transformed because of technical-vocational education and training.

After a year, I was informed by my staff that Leo and Eugene have already brought their families to Australia and are living a more comfortable life. We followed up the story and what we found out surprised us: a number of workers from Dumaguete followed the footsteps of Eugene and Leo. They enrolled at TESDA, spent their OJT in slaughterhouses, uploaded their butchering-skills-demo videos to YouTube and got hired in Australia.

Their videos, which are still accessible via YouTube, have more than 15,000 views as of today. *Noong pinapanood ko po ang mga Youtube videos ng mga certified butchers mula sa Dumaguete, napaisip ako: "Paano kung hindi nakarating ang TWSP vouchers sa kanila? Makakatapos kaya sila ng slaughtering o butchering course? Makakarating kaya sila sa Australia at makukuha po kaya nila ang magandang trabaho at malaking suweldo?"*

### ***The need for Senate Bill No. 1431 and its Rationale***

There is indeed a need to expand the allocation for TWSP and other TESDA programs to ensure that there will be more butchers like Leo and Eugene, and other tech-voc graduates like drivers, cooks, baristas, graphic designers, welders, machine operators, etc. who can land good jobs out of tech-voc training and attain a better future. This is the heart of our proposed Senate Bill 1431: increase the allocation for tech-voc training through a "Tulong-Trabaho Fund."

This *Tulong-Trabaho* Fund will be included in the General Appropriations Act and will be managed and decided on by the *Tulong-Trabaho* Board composed of the TESDA board and other stakeholders. We believe that this measure will further democratize access to select tech-voc

programs, ensure higher standards in our training systems and strengthen our certification frameworks.

Among the TESDA scholarship programs, only the Private Education Student Financial Assistance (PESFA) is fixed by law. It has an allocation of P200 million annually.

On the other hand, the TWSP receives an allocation from the General Appropriations Act. In the TESDA Roadmap, the agency targeted an annual increase of 10% for TWSP. In 2016, it received a funding of P2.2 billion, but for this year, it has been retained at the same amount of money despite the increasing demand for tech-voc courses and the imperative for productivity enhancement and skills upgrading of existing workers.

Furthermore, TESDA scholarships represented only around 13% of the total TVET outputs in all delivery modes.

*Kaya naman, sadya pong kulang at pabago-bago ang lebel ng alokasyon samantalang patuloy po sa pagtaas ang bilang ng mga mag-aaral na kumukuha ng tech-voc courses. Patuloy ring lumalawak ang mga negosyong nangangailangan ng mga manggawang patuloy na nagpapaunlad ng kanilang kaalaman bunga ng mabilis na pagbabago ng teknolohiya at mga inobasyon sa mga pook-gawaan.*

#### **Salient Provisions of Senate Bill No. 1431**

Your Committee believes that increasing the allocation for TESDA scholarship programs through a “Tulong-Trabaho Fund” will lead to higher TVET outputs and greater productivity of existing workers. This belief is supported by TESDA’s track record in providing training and employment to our people in the past years, especially when the TWSP received additional allocations.

From 1.6-million enrollees in 2010, the number of enrollees rose to 45% in 2015 at 2.3 million. The employment rate of tech-voc graduates also posted a significant improvement, from 48.5% in 2005 to 65.4% in 2014. Across na po ito, sa private at public programs ng tech-voc.

Consistent with the UniFAST Act of 2015, the “Tulong-Trabaho Fund” will pave the way for a free tech-voc, especially for young people who are not in education, employment and training and for productivity enhancement of existing workers for them to step up the career ladder and to complement technological change in the workplace.

We also propose a “Philippine Labor Force Competencies Competitiveness Program” which will be established based on our Labor Market Intelligence Reports. Hence, the measure also guarantees industry participation and incentives and engagement of local governments.

The bill will also set up a performance-based financing. Our schools and training centers must ensure that at least 70% of the *Tulong-Trabaho* Fund beneficiaries will be certified after the training program.

Transparency in the Fund’s utilization is also guaranteed through a registry of training providers that will be made accessible to the public through the Internet.

#### ***Pass the Proposed Tulong-Trabaho Act***

*Noong Lunes, Labor Day, isa po sa mga isyung binigyang-pansin natin ay ang pagtaas ng bilang ng mga Pilipinong walang trabaho. Kalahati sa kanila ay mga kabataan, edad 18-24.*

*Nakakabagabag po ang mga datos na ito:*

*Isa sa bawat apat na kabataan ay sinasabing "Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)," habang 89% ng mga kabataang kumikita ay nananatili sa mga mababa-bang klaseng trabaho o low-skilled at manual at operating machinery occupations.*

*Kaugnay nito, sa panibagong survey ng SWS na inilabas ngayong Mayo, mahigit sampung milyong Pilipino (10.4M) ang jobless samantalang bumaba rin ang optimism rate tungkol sa kalagayan ng trabaho sa bansa.*

*Gusto po nating baguhin ang sitwasyong ito upang magkaroon ng dahilang maging lalong positibo ang mga Pilipino na may trabaho silang makukuha dito sa ating bayan at patuloy na mangarap para sa magandang kinabukasan.*

*Layunin din ng “Tulong-Trabaho Act” na solusyunan ang job-skills mismatch at bigyan ng disente at permanenteng trabaho ang ating mga kababayen, lalo na ang mga kabataan.*

*Nais ko pong ibahagi na dalawa sa mga first-time jobseekers na nabalitaan ko sa mga job fairs natin noon ay sina Reynald at Carol. Hindi ko malilimutan ang kwento nila. Lumuwas ng Maynila, nagbakasakali sa mga job fairs ng DOLE. Nakakuha naman ng trabaho subalit may pag-aalinlangan*

*Si Reynald Vince Brillante, natanggap on-the-spot bilang salesman sa Saudi Arabia. Kahit*

*hindi niya gustong mag-abroad, pinatos na niya ang nakuhang trabaho. Sabi po niya: "Mas gusto ko na sa Saudi, kasi ang kontrata abroad, two years, sa Pilipinas, limang buwan lang."*

*Si Carol Magayanes naman po ay taga-Bicol. Napilitan din pong kumuha ng trabaho. Ang sabi po niya, "Okay lang sa akin na hindi tugma ang tinapos kong kurso sa makukuha kong trabaho, ang mahalaga makapasok ako para may income na rin, at makatulong sa pamilya."*

*Kung may sapat na pondo para sa tech-voc training, hindi po mag-aalinlangan ang mga kabataang humanap ng disenteng trabaho na malapit sa kanilang pamilya at naaayon sa kanilang kasanayan.*

Your Committee believes that the passage of this bill will make tech-voc accessible to all, boost our workers' confidence to face the world of work and ensure that the youth who are ready to work hard are provided with the right skill sets to obtain in-demand jobs.

More importantly, this bill is our response to the dramatic changes in the nature of jobs and to continue to enable knowledge to flow to lagging industries and sectors.

*Marapat lamang po na dagdagan natin ang programang pang-tech-voc sa pamamagitan ng Tulong-Trabaho Fund. Isakatuparan po natin ang libreng tech-voc para sa lahat. Ipasa po sana natin ang Senate Bill No. 1431, ang pondo para sa paglikhang trabaho, ang pondo ng manggagawang Pilipino.*

## MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR LEGARDA

Acknowledging that it is the tradition of the Body to study first the measure before interpellation, Senator Legarda manifested her desire to introduce her amendment at the proper time. She also expressed her full support to the measure, and she requested Senator Villanueva, sponsor of the measure, to submit to the Committee on Finance the budgetary requirements needed to implement the *Tulong-Trabaho Act*. She said that she believes in the importance of tech-voc training because not everyone could avail of a tertiary education.

She informed the Body that the disconnect between the availability of skills and the availability of job openings prompted her and Senator Ople to author the bill creating the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) in the hope that the PESO

officers scattered all over the country would be able to match the jobs available in their localities with the skills of the people there.

Senator Legarda stressed that tech-voc training complements job skills matching, as she agreed with Senator Villanueva that providing skills training or lectures in the countryside would not be enough because the people also need tool kits, capital assistance and the wherewithal to start their own micro-enterprise. She believed that the proposed measure of Senator Villanueva could be synchronized with the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Act and the Barangay Kabuhayan Act with TESDA as the implementing agency. She reiterated her request for Senator Villanueva to submit to the Committee on Finance the budgetary provisions needed for the implementation of the measure even before it could be enacted into law so that it could be funded in advance, similar to the CHED Scholarship program or the free college education law of Senators Aquino, Angara and Gatchalian which was already funded before it was enacted into law and implemented in June.

## SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1431

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Body suspended consideration of the bill.

## SPECIAL ORDER

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Body approved the transfer of Committee Report No. 45 on Senate Bill No. 1365 from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders.

## COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 45 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1365

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Second Reading, Senate Bill No. 1365 (Committee Report No. 45), entitled

AN ACT EXTENDING THE VALIDITY  
OF PHILIPPINE PASSPORTS,  
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE  
SECTION 10 OF REPUBLIC ACT  
NO. 8239, OTHERWISE KNOWN  


**AS THE “PHILIPPINE PASSPORT ACT OF 1996,” AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the Rules of the Senate, with the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Sotto, only the title of the bill was read without prejudice to the insertion of its full text into the Record of the Senate.

The Chair recognized Senator Villar for her sponsorship speech and Senator Recto for his cosponsorship speech.

**SPONSORSHIP SPEECH  
OF SENATOR VILLAR**

Senator Villar, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Relations, submitted for plenary consideration Senate Bill No. 1365, entitled “An Act Extending the Validity of Philippine Passports, Amending for the Purpose Section 10 of Republic Act No. 8239, Otherwise Known as the ‘Philippine Passport Act of 1996’ and for Other Purposes,” under Committee Report No. 65.

*Following is the full text of Senator Villar’s sponsorship speech:*

Our Constitution guarantees our countrymen’s right to travel. We should indeed have the freedom to move around and even leave the country for whatever valid purpose we may have. We could only be prevented by the government from leaving the country if there is a statutory basis for it; and the grounds are limited only to matters of national security, public safety or public health.

The government thus issues passports in order to ensure that we could exercise our right to travel abroad as almost all countries require passports bearing visas from those entering their territories. If the process of issuance or renewal of passports becomes too cumbersome or slow to Filipinos who urgently need them, especially our overseas Filipino workers, then their right to travel is effectively impaired. Adverse consequences may include lost opportunities to have gainful employment or seek greener pastures.

It is thus my privilege to cosponsor a bill that, if passed into law, will provide much-needed relief to our countrymen, particularly the overseas Filipino workers who have jobs waiting for them abroad. I am pleased to cosponsor Senate Bill No. 1365 under Committee Report

No. 45, entitled “AN ACT EXTENDING THE VALIDITY OF PHILIPPINE PASSPORTS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 10 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8239, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘PHILIPPINE PASSPORT ACT OF 1996’ AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

While the bill is plain and simple, it is decidedly beneficial to the travelling public. The bill seeks to assure the government’s protection of the right to travel for a duration of ten years from the current five years by amending Section 10 of RA 8239, or the Philippine Passport Act of 1996. Section 10 essentially states that the validity of a passport is only five years from the date it was issued. However, as currently practiced, a passport’s validity is actually less than five years because travel abroad is often disallowed for one with a passport that will expire in six-months’ time or less.

In order to make travel abroad easier for the OFWs, the bill simply extends the validity of regular passports to 10 years, although the five-year validity of passports of minors or those individuals under 18 years old is being retained. A minor’s passport should indeed be renewed every five years because a minor’s face changes while growing up. An adult’s facial features basically remain the same for longer periods; hence, the renewal of an adult’s passport every 10 years is apt. At any rate, the Department of Foreign Affairs is authorized to limit the period of validity to less than the regular validity period when the interest of national security, public safety or public health calls for it.

One may question the necessity of extending the validity of passports to 10 years. The solution one may say is perhaps merely to further streamline the requirements for the issuance or renewal passports, to open additional offices, to hire additional personnel or to procure more machines needed in passport production. The process, which in my opinion, is already streamlined, still involves the preparation and submission of documents that will be visually evaluated by DFA personnel. Opening additional office spaces, hiring additional personnel and procuring more machines obviously take time and will not immediately translate to solving the problem of long lines of waiting applicants.

The DFA reports that there are 868 of its personnel nationwide who are involved in the processing of passports. In 2016, they were processing 3,123,004 applications for new passports, renewals or replacements of lost passports. The DFA issued 3,102,278 passports in 2016, leaving approximately 20,000 applications

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that are perhaps still being evaluated together with new applications submitted in 2017. From 2010 to 2016, there has been a 29.3% annual growth of passport issuances. With an ever-increasing population having an ever-increasing capacity or need to travel abroad, the human factor still delays the process to a certain extent.

The extension of the validity of passports to ten years is necessary for a number of reasons. I mentioned some of them earlier. As other countries, such as the USA and Canada, already issue passports that are valid for 10 years, the DFA does not oppose the proposal to increase the validity of passports from the present five years to 10 years.

In a committee hearing in the House of Representatives, Migrante International has expressed its approval of this legislative measure. Migrante acknowledges that the extension of the validity period to 10 years will lengthen the OFWs' opportunity to enjoy and exercise their constitutional rights, will make them more productive at work, and will provide them more time to enjoy with their families.

Going back then to the predicament of our OFWs, the government's focus should be to find ways to make it easier for them to find jobs and get to their employers abroad. We owe a lot to our OFWs. They keep our economy afloat with their remittances of approximately \$50 billion annually. Giving them a 10-year guarantee on their right to travel abroad will certainly be a great help to them.

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte acknowledges the importance of this legislative measure. In his first State of the Nation address on July 25, 2016, he mentioned the necessity of stretching the validity of passports from the current five to 10 years. He deplored the situation of passport applicants he observed in Davao. There were long lines of applicants, some lying down on the pavement. Some even started lining up the night before, slept on the pavement overnight so that they will be the first ones to be served by DFA in the morning.

Given the foregoing, I certainly look forward to your swift approval of Senate Bill No. 1365 under Committee Report No. 45.

## COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR RECTO

In his cosponsorship speech, Senate President Pro Tempore Recto talked about the far-reaching benefits that Filipinos could get once the validity of

the Philippine passports would be extended to 10 years.

*Following is the full text of Senator Recto's sponsorship speech follows:*

This bill is pretty straightforward: It extends the period of validity of the Philippine passport from five to 10 years.

But once it becomes a law, its benefits are far-reaching.

By simply lengthening the expiry date of the passport, Filipinos will be spared the hassle and the hardship of renewing their passports every 60 months.

This is inarguably one anti-red tape measure which should have been done a long time ago.

The thing is, while technology has made our passports hard to counterfeit, it has not made it easy to secure.

Not far from here, queues of applicants coil around a building, rain or shine, to apply for that document that would allow them to travel.

It is a scene replayed in many parts of the country. President Digong recalled the many times he was moonlighting as a taxi driver when he would see applicants queue overnight and sleep on the cold pavement of a mall in Davao City where passports were being issued.

The call for passports with longer validity is not something new. It was not hard to discover as if it were a distant meteorite. It is a simple fix that does not involve rocket science.

From this Chamber alone, many of us have been pleading for more than a decade for a Philippine passport that is valid for more than five years.

Unfortunately, while chips have already been embedded into our passports during that time, common sense had a hard time penetrating the heads of those to whom we had addressed our appeals.

So, finally, of all the passport-related apps ever invented, the most needed, which is a longer legal shelf life, is now provided in this bill.

And with it, the relief it hopefully brings, to be felt, for example, by an OFW in Europe who, to have his passport renewed, needs to ride a train to another country because that is where the nearest consulate is.

Or the seaman who, instead of spending his vacation with his loved ones, has to spend



days to renew what is literally his family's passport to a good life. Or the retired *lola* who needs it for her annual "apo-stolic" missions to her children who now live abroad.

Or the millennial backpacker who survives on instant noodles just so she can bag *piso-sale* tickets and who has been echoing the plaints of many Pinoy wanderers: "*Kung hindi pwede ang visa-free travel sa maraming bansa, habaan na lang ang bisa ng passport.*"

Let us, however, issue this warning to those who may want to profit out of 10-year passports by jacking up their cost.

*Bawal po yan.* The established rule in setting fees for government-issued documents is that whatever charges imposed should merely recover the cost in processing and producing them.

In short, passport fees to be retained by the DFA must be just enough to recoup expenses in rendering this public service.

That is why if you will examine the price structure of one ordinary Philippine passport expressly processed, of the P1,200, only P250 goes to the DFA.

While on paper, the DFA's passport income of P4.1 million in 2015 appears to be huge, it merely reflects the collected amount for eventual remittance to the passport producers, and not the retained income, which is only a minuscule portion of total collections.

When Rizal left the Philippines for the first time on May 3, 1882, for Spain, he was carrying a passport under the name Jose Mercado. It was obtained for him by his uncle Antonio Rivera. Fortunately for him, locomotives have begun crisscrossing Europe rendering border controls useless, so like a modern-day Schengen visa holder, he was able to travel to many countries, and hooked a girl in each, seamlessly.

This bill will not make every Pinoy a Rizal when it comes to the ease of getting a passport, as he got his through an agent, and with an alias, to boot.

Nowadays, nonappearance is a big no-no, and using an alias constitutes passport fraud.

But at least with this bill, the frequency of getting a passport, and encountering the attendant hassles, will be cut.

With passport issuances reaching three million a year, at least 30 million will benefit from this bill in the next 10 years.

I congratulate the chairman of the reporting committee, Sen. Alan Cayetano, and thank him for consolidating my Senate Bill No. 795 with this bill as I call for its speedy approval.

## SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR CAYETANO

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the sponsorship speech of Senator Cayetano on Senate Bill No. 1365 was considered read into the Journal and Record of the Senate.

*Following is the full text of Senator Cayetano's speech:*

I have the honor to cosponsor Senate Bill No. 1365, under Committee Report No. 45. This proposed legislative measure seeks to extend the validity of the Philippine passport from our current five years to ten years by amending Section 10 of Republic Act No. 8239, otherwise known as the "Philippine Passport Act of 1996."

The law we seek to amend was enacted more than twenty years ago. There have been a lot of noteworthy developments and technological innovations since then. In 1996, according to data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), there were only around 900,000 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). Recently, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) reported that out of the estimated 10.2 million overseas Filipinos worldwide, there are now an estimated 2.4 million OFWs with existing work contracts overseas. The increasing affordability of foreign travel has also led to a significant increase in the number of Filipinos wishing to travel for business and leisure.

As a result, there has been an overwhelming increase in the number of passport applications at the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and its consular and satellite offices all over the country and abroad. Despite the best efforts of the Department to process new passports at a timely rate, congestion remains evident. In 2015, it was reported that the DFA experienced a backlog of 42,230 delayed passports and a reported two-month waiting time before an online appointment can be secured for a biometric data capture in DFA offices. In short, *kahit sa pag-apply ng bagong passport—traffic pa rin ang Pilipinas.*

In addition to the delays experienced by applicants, there have been news reports about errors in the passport application/printing process. As an example: Roselle Sarmiento, an OFW in

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Saudi Arabia, was distraught when she saw her name misspelled on her new passport. After a long two months of waiting for her appointment, Roselle was inconvenienced to apply once more and wait for another two months before the earliest available time slot. Furthermore, she was reportedly asked to again pay the application fee. As a seamstress in Saudi Arabia earning simple wages, the passport fee was a hefty amount to pay twice. Experiencing a similar situation, Adelina from Davao was quoted as saying, “Pinapa-renew at pinapabayad nila ako ulit. Paano naman ‘yon, paulit-ulit akong nagbabayad. Sa katulad ko na malit lang ang sweldo, masakit po sa akin ‘yon.”

During the committee hearings on this proposed measure, we heard anecdotes shared by Ms. Susan “Toots” Ople, founder of the Blas Ople Policy Center and well-known advocate of OFW rights, about the various inconveniences experienced by prospective and returning OFWs seeking to apply for or renew their travel documents. Some prospective OFWs reportedly missed their scheduled flights and lost work opportunities because they could not secure their travel documents on time.

Government agencies were established to serve and assist citizens rather than to entail burdens and make life more difficult for them. Every citizen, especially an OFW seeking to apply for or renew a passport, should be treated as VIP. Hence, the proposal of your Senate Committee on Foreign Relations is to extend the validity of the Philippine passport to ten (10) years, except for individuals under 18 years of age who shall only be issued a passport with five-year validity. This is in recognition of the fact that their facial features are likely to change radically, and this might cause problems in immigration procedures.

Senate Bill No. 1365 also mandates DFA to issue the necessary implementing rules and regulations and adopt best practices to ensure that the provisions of the proposed measure are implemented in the convergence with necessary reforms to make the passport processing system seamless, convenient and pro-people, and the production and security of passports at par with technological advances and world standards.

While this proposal shall have the direct effect of supporting all Filipino travelers, it shall especially ease the burden of our modern-day heroes, the overseas Filipino workers, who are inconvenienced with long queues and lost valuable time due to the tedious passport application/renewal process. If this proposal is enacted, our

millions of passport holders will submit an application every 10 years instead of five years. This will decrease the number of passport applicants, cut the passport processing time in half, and hopefully solve the reported congestion in passport processing.

In 2015, the DFA issued a total of 3,052,324 passports through its domestic and overseas offices. Through the passage of this legislative measure, this number will be divided in half. This will also alleviate our Filipino travelers from paying the application fees, as well as related transportation and other costs, twice in a decade. After all, there is a saying that goes, “time is money and money is time.”

While the legislative department extends the validity of the Philippine passport through the passage of this measure, we are relying on the DFA and other relevant offices to intensify efforts to make the administrative process simpler. In fairness to the DFA, they have established additional regional consular offices, opened satellite offices in shopping malls, and introduced the online appointment process. They also spearheaded a modernization program that improved the security features of our passports and made them harder to fake. The new design of the Philippine passport now features our tourism destinations, and its security features are reportedly at par or even better than world standards. We look forward to having more innovations like these.

During the first State of the Nation Address (SONA), our President bewailed on how passport applicants in SM Davao even sleep on pavements due to the limited number of applicants being accommodated under first-come, first-served rule. He said, “Nasasaktan talaga ako. Masakit eh,” and addressed the Cabinet members to make use of the computer and other available technologies to ensure that people need not line up under the heat of the sun or under the pouring rain. That same day, he also promised the Filipino people that the government shall work towards the amendment of the 1996 Passport Law to lengthen the validity of the passports from the current five years to 10 years. Today, with this proposed measure, we wish to help him fulfill that promise.

I therefore call upon our colleagues to extend their full support to this proposal.

#### **SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1365**

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no

objection, the Body suspended consideration of the bill.

### **MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR SOTTO**

Senator Sotto stated that the Body was supposed to tackle the Corporation Code; however, Senator Recto has requested that his amendments on the measure be taken up on Monday.

### **PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 335**

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 335, entitled

**RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND SYMPATHY AND SINCERE CONDOLENCES OF THE SENATE ON THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE LETICIA RAMOS-SAHANI, FORMER SENATOR (1987-1998) AND SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE (1993-1996).**

With the permission of the Body, only the title of the resolution was read without prejudice to the insertion of its text into the Record of the Senate.

### **COSPONSOR**

Upon her request, Senator Villar was made cosponsor of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 335.

### **COAUTHORS**

Senator Sotto manifested that all senators present are coauthors of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 335.

### **INSERTION OF SPEECHES INTO THE RECORD**

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Body approved the insertion of the sponsorship/cosponsorship speeches of Senate President Pimentel and Senators Legarda and Sotto on Proposed Senate Resolution No. 335 into the Journal and Record of the Senate.

### **SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATE PRESIDENT PIMENTEL**

I never had the honor to serve the Senate with

Senator Leticia Ramos-Shahani, but from what I have learned of her from those who knew her personally, one of whom is my father, I can only say that the Senate was blessed by her selfless and dedicated presence in our institution as a lawmaker for two terms.

This is why I deem it a privilege to sponsor this resolution in honor of a hero to women, the rule of law, and the underprivileged of our country.

When we speak of heroes, we think of brave souls who have taken up arms against the enemies of our country, or those who directly supported our compatriots who clashed with foreign invaders.

The woman we honor never bore arms against foreign invaders nor tended to the wounds of those who did. But she relentlessly fought for the interests of our newly-independent nation as the first female Ambassador to Romania, as our Ambassador to the Commonwealth of Australia, and as Deputy Foreign Minister under President Corazon Aquino.

She fought for the welfare of women and the disadvantaged in the halls of the United Nations as chairperson of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, as Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, as Secretary-General of the Seventh Congress on Crime Prevention and Treatment of Offenders, and in the Third World Conference on Women.

As senator, she fought for our country's foreign policy interests, for the welfare of women, for the preservation of our culture and the arts, for our farmers and fisherfolk, for small businessmen, for victims of rape and discrimination, and for moral governance, through her advocacies and the laws she passed.

Even when not in government service, she fought for the interests of the country, fighting ignorance in her distinguished career as an educator in the University of the Philippines, Miriam College, and the Lyceum of the Philippines.

She was an unrelenting public servant. Even as a member of the private sector, she continued campaigning for the upliftment of people, such as when she established the *Shahani Gatas ng Kalabaw Products, Inc.*, providing much needed extra income for farmers in Pangasinan and the neighboring provinces.

In her many careers, there are very few people who were not positively affected by the causes she advocated. Even people born long after her passing would continue to benefit from the fruits of her labor.

And in her we also found a shining example of a morality in governance. Despite being a member of the foreign service in the Marcos government, she did not hesitate to resign and support another hero, Corazon Aquino, when the latter challenged the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. It was not an easy decision to make.

Heroes are not just found in the bloody fields of battle. They can be found wherever someone decides to do what is right and to fight for what is right, even when it does not bring her any personal benefit. They can be found wherever someone decides that the welfare of others is just as important as hers.

Senator Shahani's list of achievements outshines those of most men. Yet she did all these things at a time when the glass ceiling was very real for women, making her achievements all the more remarkable. But for me, what made Senator Shahani even greater was that, through her laws protecting women from discrimination and her work in the United Nations, she made sure that other women are empowered to follow in her footsteps.

This is why Senator Leticia Ramos-Shahani is a hero to me.

It is a source of pride for me that she chose the Senate as a venue to advance her advocacies. Our beloved institution is enriched by her presence in its chamber.

Therefore, let us support this resolution to honor Senator Leticia Ramos-Shahani, the first female Senate President Pro Tempore, for her contributions to the enhancement of our foreign policy, the strengthening of the rule of law, human rights, justice, moral governance, and the development of the youth of the land.

By passing this resolution today, we can say "Thank you, Senator Shahani. We will continue your causes from this point on."

#### **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR LEGARDA**

I rise to cosponsor Proposed Senate Resolution

No. 335, "Resolution Expressing the Profound Sympathy and Sincere Condolences of the Senate on the Death of the Former Senator and Senate President Pro Tempore Leticia Ramos-Shahani.

Manang Letty, as we fondly called her, was the embodiment of the empowered Filipina. Her passing on Women's Month was not mere coincidence. Even until her last breath, she wanted to make a statement on women empowerment.

Her dedication as a public servant, as a legislator, as a diplomat, as an educator and as a mother, was unmatched for she continued to passionately campaign and push for her advocacies even after retiring from government service.

It is but fitting that we continue to honor Manang Letty's memory for her legacy shall live forever.

#### **COSPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR SOTTO**

One's legacy upon death is not dependent on the eloquence of those who deliver eulogies, for it would be dangerous to rely on orators to make a verdict on how a life was lived.

One's life is the best speech about one's self.

Our duty is to remember that life, and draw lessons from its living. Senator Shahani did not preach humility, she simply lived humbly; she did not preach integrity, she just simply stayed away from anything unworthy; she did not preach calmness, serenity and diplomacy, she merely showed it in her words, actions and demeanor, from the gentleness of her voice, to the fluidity of her moves.

She was the Filipina who brought timeless Filipino values into modern times of women empowerment and gender sensitivity.

Like the moon which is sometimes unnoticed due to the light from brother sun, Senator Shahani shone in her own right. In the United Nations, she was there. In the euphoria of EDSA in the 1980s, she was picked by President Cory for her Senate team. In the crafting of our laws for women's rights and empowerment, she was there. With just about one or two others, I had the distinction of having been here when Senator Shahani served as senator. It was a learning experience.

Senator Shahani symbolized education as the door to achieving one's full potential. From the University of the Philippines to Columbia in the United States, to Sorbonne in Paris—she drank on their fountains of wisdom.

Education, Diplomacy, and Women Empowerment – these are Senator Leticia Valdez Ramos-Shahani's legacies. These are our inheritance from her today. She may have left us but her legacies will live on forever.

#### **ADOPTION OF PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 335**

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 335 was adopted by the Body.

#### **SUSPENSION OF SESSION**

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, the session was suspended.

*It was 4:21 p.m.*

#### **RESUMPTION OF SESSION**

At 4:58 p.m., the session was resumed.

#### **MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR SOTTO**

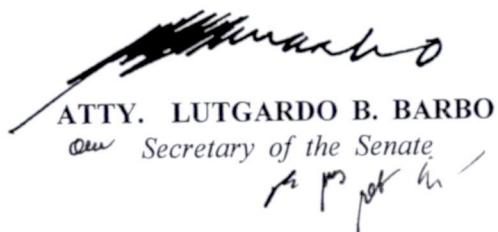
Senator Sotto informed the Body that the amendments to the Corporation Code (Senate Bill No. 1280) and the proposed Anti-Discrimination Act (Senate Bill No. 1271) originally scheduled for discussion that day would be the first two items of the agenda on Monday.

#### **ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION**

Upon motion of Senator Sotto, there being no objection, the Chair declared the session adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of Monday, May 8, 2017.

*It was 4:58 p.m.*

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.

  
**ATTY. LUTGARDO B. BARBO**  
*Secretary of the Senate*  
*f/ppt/b*

Approved on May 8, 2017