



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Senate
Pasay City

Journal

SESSION NO. 10
Tuesday, August 13, 2019

**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.

SILENT PRAYER

The Body observed a minute of silent prayer.

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.	Pacquiao, E. M. D.
Binay, M. L. N. S.	Pangilinan, F. N.
Cayetano, P. S.	Poe, G.
Dela Rosa, R. B. M.	Revilla Jr., R. B.
Drilon, F. M.	Sotto III, V. C.
Gatchalian, W.	Villanueva, J.
Hontiveros, R.	Villar, C. A.
Lacson, P. M.	Zubiri, J. M. F.
Lapid, M. L. M.	

With 17 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senators Go, Gordon, Marcos, Pimentel, Recto and Tolentino arrived after the roll call.

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

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the Journal of Session No. 9 (August 7, 2019) and considered it approved.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS**

Senator Zubiri acknowledged the presence in the gallery of the following:

- Members of the League of Vice Governors of the Philippines — Atty. Katherine Agapay of Laguna, president; Atty. Reynaldo Quimpo of



- Aklan, chairman; Jolo Revilla of Cavite, vice chairman; Jerry Singson of Ilocos Sur, executive vice president; Sam Nantes of Quezon, vice president for Luzon; Ting Garin of Iloilo, vice president for the Visayas; Elmer de Peralta of Sarangani, vice president for Mindanao; Carlo Loreto of Leyte, secretary general; Jonah Pimentel of Camarines Norte, assistant secretary general; Cristina Garcia of Bataan, treasurer; Mark Macias of Negros Oriental, public relations officer; and Peter Alfaro of Oriental Mindoro, auditor; and
- Fiscal Joanne Caranto, German Aboloc and Atty. Israel Peren from Makati – guests of Sen. Bong Revilla.

Senate President Sotto welcomed the guests to the Senate.

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR PANGILINAN

Availing himself of the privilege hour, Senator Pangilinan spoke on the plight of the local rice farmers and the rice industry as a whole that were adversely affected by the poor implementation of the Rice Tarification Act.

Following is the full text of Senator Pangilinan's speech:

I rise on a matter of personal and collective privilege, as a member of the Senate and as a Filipino who cannot live without rice. In a manner of speaking, I rise for rice. I rise on behalf of our rice farmers and the rice industry now facing serious challenges in the aftermath of a deregulated rice industry.

The speech is about the suffering and the losses of our rice farmers and the difficulties they are confronted with, and I plead in their behalf to find solutions to their urgent need for income and for — like many of us here who are grateful to have — at least three square meals a day.

Pinapakinggan tayo ngayon through FB Live ng mga rice farmers sa Mindoro, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, at Isabela. Ang nagpapakain sa atin, ang mga magsasaka, ay naghihirap at nagugutom. Kapag hindi natin tinutukan ang kanilang kahirapan at gutom, hindi malayong magugutom din ang buong bansa. We cannot have our food producers going hungry. We cannot hope to be food-secure as a nation if we are not farmer-secure as a people.

Five months after the Rice Tarification Act became law, what has happened to our rice farmers, our rice industry, and our rice production? *Pagkaraang ipatupad ang unrestricted rice importation, maraming rice farmers ang nagsusumbong sa atin sa bunga nitong pasakit.*

Allow me to point out at the onset that the objectives and the intention of the rice tariffication measure are laudable. It recognized that while consumers would in the long-run benefit from the inflow of cheap imported rice, the farmers would, however, be affected adversely, and as such, needed the support by way of the RCEF or the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund. *Isa sa naging problema ay hindi agad maramdaman ng ating mga magsasaka ang suporta mula sa RCEF at ang kilos ng gobyerno. Dahil dito, hirap at gutom ang resulta.*

Noong Abril, may isang magsasaka mula Nueva Ecija ang lumapit sa atin. Sabi niya, "Pinapatay kami ng rice tariffication." Binibili raw ng dose pesos kada kilo ang kanyang ani, eh mula dose pesos hanggang trese pesos ang gastos niya o production cost. Noong nakaraang taon, binibili ang ani niya ng P21.50. Halos kalahati na lang.

According to the farmers, *tumaas din ang cost of labor nila. Nadagdagang singil ang mga farm laborers sa planting dahil nawalan sila ng kita sa pag-harvest sa pagdating ng mga harvester. Yung nawalang kita sa kanila sa harvesting, pinataw nila sa planting kaya tumaas din ang cost of production.*

And despite the Free Irrigation Law, dahil din sa kakulangan sa tamang pagpapatupad ng batas, may binabayaran pa rin sila para maambunan sila ng patubig. Kapag wala silang bayad, walang rasyon; wala rin mag-me-maintain ng irrigasyon.

Iyong ibang farmers, binibenta na lamang ang kanilang lupa kesa paulit-ulit na malugi.

Sa Isabela, na isang rice-producing province, maraming imported rice sa mga palengke kaya patuloy na bumabagsak ang presyo ng palay. Kahit ang NFA hindi rin binibili ang kanilang palay — di lamang dahil sa presyo, kundi dahil puno rin ang kanilang mga warehouse ng imported na bigas. Kaya naman napipilitan ang ating mga magsasaka na itambak ang kanilang palay sa kani-kanilang mga bahay sa pag-asang maibebenta na rin nila ito nang hindi palugi. Pero tandaan natin na magsisimula ngayong Setyembre ang



wet harvest season kung saan pinakamalaki ang ating ani; 60% ng ating rice harvest ay dumadating mula September hanggang December. Kung hindi nila maibebenta ang nakaimbak na palay, mapipilitan silang ibenta ito nang mas mura pa sa darak, gaya ng naismong sa atin. Masakit sa loob ng magsasaka na pagkain na ng baboy ang pinaghirapan niya sa loob ng mahigit tatlong buwan.

Official data also support their claim. In July 2019, farm-gate prices of *palay* or unhusked rice was at either P17.78 per kilo, according to the PSA, or according to the DA, P14.10 in 11 provinces. These are between 17% and 34% percent lower than 2018 prices.

Magkano ang ikinalugi ng mga magsasaka?

The country produces about 20 million metric tons of *palay* or 20 billion kilos of *palay* every year. So, for every one peso drop in *palay* prices per kilo, that is P20 billion that our farmers lose. *Mahigit P3.00 kada isang kilo ng palay ang nawala mula 2018 at ngayong 2019. Multiply the drop of P3.00 per kilo by P20 billion and the total amount that our farmers lost would be P60 billion so far. It is only August. Hindi pa kasama dito ang bulto ng aanihin mula September hanggang December. Nasa bulsa na ng mga magsasaka natin last year iyong P60 billion na yan, wala ngayon.*

If we talk about one farmer who averages 4,000 kilos of *palay* per harvest, he loses P4,000 for every peso drop in *palay* prices in one season.

Kaya ang safety net na inilagay natin sa batas, iyong Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) na P10 billion, kung P60 billion na ang kanilang nawala sa bulsa, lumalabas ay kulang na kulang.

Before rice tariffication in 2015, according to the family income and expenditure survey ng PSA, our farmers were already among the poorest, earning P100,000 a year, or P8,300 a month, or P277 a day, way below the minimum wage. This is also below the poverty line level of P108,800 a year, and way below the average family income of P267,000 a year.

Kahit noon, nagkakautang-utang na ang mga magsasaka natin. Kahit noon, nagugutom na ang nagpapakain sa atin. But with the influx of rice imports, mas lumala ang kalagayan nila. Hindi na lalo mabayaran ang utang, lalong nababaon sa utang, lalong nagugutom.

Matatanda na rin ang mga rice farmers natin. Wala nang sumusunod sa yapak nila

dahil sa hirap ng pagsasaka. 'Ika nga, a vow of poverty kapag ikaw ay naging magsasaka. Kaya naman katulad ng sinabi ng isa pang dalubhasa, umalis na lang ang marami sa kanila sa pagsasaka. Ito ang mabilis at brutal na mga epekto ng hindi tamang pag-implementa ng batas sa ating mga magsasaka.

Economist Noel De Dios said, "To date, about 200,000 rice farmers have stopped working on food production."

In a recent speech in Ilocos Sur, the President himself recognizes the security implications of neglecting and ignoring our starving farmers. *Sabi niya nga, "Pag mahal, bilhin mo na, kaysa kung mag-NPA." At kapag pakaunti nang pakaunti na ang nagbubungkal ng lupa para magtanim ng palay, aasa tayo sa ibang bansa para sa pagkain natin. Hindi ito tama.*

Ngayon pa lang, dahil sa drought sa Thailand, itinigil na muna nila ang pag-export ng bigas. Inuuna muna nila ang mga mama-mayan nila. Kapag nangyari ito sa ibang mga pinagkukunan natin ng bigas, paano na tayo?

Rice farmers all over the country have made the same conclusion. At this point, unrestricted rice imports without the immediate support for the rice farmers is killing them and the industry.

Kumusta naman ang ibang bahagi ng rice industry?

Namamatay na rin ang mga rice mills either kasi hindi pa nila ma-unload yung binili nila dati ng mga P19 to P20 per kilo na palay o dahil hindi sila makapag-compete sa imported rice. 'Yan din ang dahilan bakit hindi bumibili ang traders ng local palay. They would rather import para hindi malugi at ma-maximize nila ang kita.

In a *Philippine Star* article dated July 30 this year, Mr. Joji Co, president of the Rice Millers' Organization, (PhilConGrains) said, "Four thousand of the country's 10,000 millers have stopped operating." This P400-billion rice milling industry employs about 200,000 workers. *Apektado rin ang mga manggagawa.* And because less rice is being milled, there is a shortage of *darak* or feeds, endangering the poultry and pork industries. *Darak* prices have more than doubled since last year due to the lack of supply. Considering that 70% of the cost of production of livestock is feeds, unless the shortage of *darak* is addressed, *sisipa rin ang presyo ng baboy at manok.*

In the same *Philippine Star* article, Elias Jose Inciong, president of the United Broilers



Raisers Association, said, "Prices of *darak* or rice bran, a key component for feeds for poultry and hogs, have already doubled to P17 per kilo from the average P8 to P9 per kilo." This is the first time that the price of *darak* which is used for animal feeds, a by-product of *palay* milling, is almost equal to the price of *palay* itself. *Sabi ni Inciong*, "dapat mas mura ang *darak*, sa *palay* kasi by-product lang ang *darak*, pero hindi yan ang nangyayari ngayon." This means that unrestricted rice importation also endangers small poultry and pig farms. *At para sa mga mahilig sa fried chicken at inihaw na liempo, umasang mas mamahal ito kung hindi tayo kikilos.*

Hindi pa natin naisasama ang epekto nito sa mga trabaho at maliliit na negosyo sa kanayunan. Ilan kaya sa mga farm-hands, driver at pahinante ng delivery truck, nagbebenta sa karinderia at iba pa ang hindi kumikita o mas maliit ang kita sa ngayon?

We have to note the spillover effects of all of these in the rural economy which will suffer from reduced purchasing power of rural consumers, including farmers. In other words, *mala-kung pagsubok sa produksyon ng pagkain ang bunga ng rice tariffication. May domino effect.*

Pero magbalik-tanaw tayo. Bakit pinasa ang batas na ito? Kung naaalala po natin ang mga mahahabang pila para sa NFA rice bago matapos ang 2018, alam nating mayroong sapat na suplay ng commercial rice pero hindi nag-mura ang NFA rice na nabibili sa palengke ng P27 hanggang P32 kada kilo kumpara sa mas mahal na commercial rice na pumapalo ng mahigit P40 per kilo.

The NFA rice stocks were depleted. Why? At the very least, because of incompetence. At worst, traders in cahoots with officials at that time, through rebagging and diversion of NFA rice stocks, made a killing.

The government's economic team pushed for the passage of the law due to high rice prices and inflation, with inflation reaching a nine-year high of 6.7% in September to October 2018. And when Malacañang certified the bill as urgent, they said the measure aims to: 1) address the urgent need to improve availability of rice in the country; 2) prevent artificial rice shortage; 3) reduce the prices of rice in the market; 4) curtail the prevalence of corruption and cartel domination in the rice industry."

Ano ang nangyari?

On no. 1, "address the urgent need to improve availability of rice in the country," yes,

rice became available everywhere, but with dire consequences for our rice farmers and millers and other stakeholders. *Ang balita natin, bumabaha ng bigas sa mga warehouse. Sabi ng isang magsasaka, "Nalulunod na kami sa palay at bigas."*

Ayon sa nakalap natin mula sa mga ahensyang nakausap natin, simula January hanggang July ngayong taon, mahigit 2.355 milyong tonelada na ng bigas ang inangkat natin mula sa ibang bansa, mga bansang malaki at malakas ang tulong sa kanilang mga magsasaka.

Baha talaga ng bigas kasi the importation for the entire year of 2018 was almost two million tons at 1.966 million tons. Eh ngayong 2019, August pa lamang, lagpas kalahating taon pa lang ng 2019, 2.355 million tons na ang rice imports.

Ano ang epekto nito sa mga magsasaka natin? Nababalewala ang pagod ng Pilipinong magsasaka. Ang nangyayari, binubuhay natin ang mga magsasaka ng ibang bansa na tumatanggap ng malaking tulong sa gobyerno nila, habang ginugutom at namamatay ang kabuhayan ng ating mga magsasaka.

On no. 2, "prevent artificial rice shortage," there is no artificial rice shortage now, but who manufactured the 2018 rice shortage? There would not have been any perceived shortage with simple proper management of NFA rice importation.

*Ang masakit pa rito, the law failed in objective no. 3, "reduce the prices of rice in the market," which is also a promise to consumers. Nakinabang ba tayong bumibili ng bigas sa pagbaha ng imported rice? Five months after the government allowed the rice imports, *mahal pa rin ang bigas.**

Let us compare the latest PSA figures with those from a week before the law took effect on March 5. In March, the average retail prices of regular- and well-milled rice ranged from P40.22 to P44.28 per kilo while those in the second week of July ranged from P38.40 to P42.86 per kilo. According to the PSA, retail prices inched down by P1.83 or 4%. So, *bumaba lang ng mga dalawang piso ang presyo ng bigas sa merkado.*

Naalala po natin sa mga debate para maipasa ang rice tariffication measure na ang sinasabi P7 hanggang P10 ang ibababa ng presyo ng bigas. Hindi po ito nangyayari pa. Doble ang pangakong napako. Si Ka Nena na magsasaka at maging si Ka Igme na nama-malengke, hindi nakinabang sa pagdagsa ng imported na bigas.

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Moreover, if we compare the effect of the law on the consumer and the farmer, *halos walang pakinabang sa mamimili ito dahil P1.83 lang ang ibinaba ng presyo ng bigas* from 2018, kung kailan naman nagkaroon ng rice mismanagement, *samantalang ang lugti sa magsasaka ay P3.72 kada kilo.*

Kung ikukumpara natin sa presyo ng bigas noong 2017 at 2016, noong wala pa iyang batas, hindi hamak na mas mababa pa ito na binibili natin ng P41.89 noong July 2017 at P41.68 noong July 2016. Kita naman ang diperensya dahil noong July 2018, P44.69 at July 2019, P42.86.

Sa objective No. 4, “curtail the prevalence of corruption and cartel domination in the rice industry,” *sa ngayon ang balita natin, mayroong technical rice smuggling sa pamamagitan ng under valuation na pinapasok na imported rice.* There are two ways on how this is done: 1) *Pinapababa ang actual value in terms of quality; 2) It is undervalued in terms of quantity.* *Ibig sabihin nito, may sabwatan sa Customs at sa mga trader.* *Kung ang totoong value ng bili nila ng rice sa Vietnam ay US\$375 per ton, they will just declare it at US\$275 per ton.* *I-declare nila sa 25% broken na bigas iyon pala 5% broken lang.*

Sa quantity naman, halimbawa, ang isang crate or 20-foot container, ang laman ay 500 sacks, ang idedeklara nila 400 sacks lamang. Mas gusto ng mga rice smugglers ito. Mas gusto nila ito dahil mas mahirap mahuli at may appearance na “legit”. Ang term na ginagamit nila, ang “illegal nagiging legit”. At alam natin na kapag may rice smuggling naiipit pa rin ang mga magsasaka natin sa sobrang babang presyo ng bigas na pinapasok.

Maraming tanong tungkol sa batas at sa pagpapatupad nito. Gusto nating ma-review ang batas, partikular ang P10-billion Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund.

Rice Competitiveness Fund, which is funded by tariffs generated by rice imports, is set up to make the domestic industry more competitive through farm mechanization, access to better seeds, and more financing and extension services, among others.

There appears to be a defect in the way RCEF was designed. First, the funds were channelled directly to small research agencies like PhilRice and PhilMech that do not have the manpower and network to implement large programs right away. So, inevitably, much time has to be spent in recruiting people, setting up satellite offices, buying equipment, *et cetera.*

RCEF should have been channelled through the regular DA bureaucracy because many of the RCF programs such as mechanization and seed distribution were already being done by DA before. What was just needed was to put in safeguards so that the mistakes in the past would not be repeated. The other defect is that the RCEF reallocated the use of funds, whereas the needs of farmers will invariably differ depending on the locality and over time. *Dapat inuna iyong plano bago iyong budget sa RCF.*

We need to ask the DA for a timeline and a step-by-step process for the release of the RCEF.

We also want to ask, “How do we make sure that the fund would reach the rice farmer at the time that he needs it?” *Nakita na natin ang problema sa sistema ng ACEF noon na hindi napakina-bangan ng mga farmers. Kung kani-kanino na lamang napunta ang pondo.*

Pero, nandito tayo sa isang emergency situation. Ang kailangang dapat bigyang pansin agad ay ang kalagayan ng ating mga magsasaka lalo na ngayong lean months at lalo na kapag dumagsa na ang bulto ng aanihin mula sa darating na September hanggang December.

We propose eight measures to save our farmers and the rice industry ASAP, as in actions that can be done next month—the start of the harvest season:

1. The use of the agriculture special safeguards under Republic Act No. 880 that can be triggered by a volume or price threshold of imports. We have been informed by sources in the DA and the BOC that we have already reached the triggered volume of over two million tons imported and over P10 billion in tariffs.

If indeed the triggered volume has been reached, the law states that a special safeguard duty may be set at a level not exceeding one-third of the applicable duty. The DA secretary, in coordination with the BOC, may do the same. Based on the 35% rate, an additional 11.67% tariff may be increased or may be imposed so that it will increase the tariff to 47%.

According to PhilRice’s Dr. Flordeliza Bordey, the tariff rate that is computed that equals the prices of imported and domestic rice is a tariff of 70%. However, after 22 years and three postponements, we committed to only 35%. We owe it to the farmers to address the situation in a fair manner. WTO allows for cases like these through regular safeguards and agriculture special safe-guards both of which are also embodied in our laws.

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We must act swiftly particularly on agriculture safeguards which may be done within two months.

Harvest time is coming and this is urgent. If we do this, the consequent maximum safeguard will be 47%—35% plus 12%, still lower than the 70% but enough to provide some protection for our farmers. And if traders follow their standard margins, the retail prices today will not increase.

2. We can also have recourse to the general safeguards and anti-dumping duties.

Relevant WTO provisions and Safeguards Measures Act of 2000 provide that “the general safeguard duties can be imposed if a product is being imported into the country and in increased quantities, whether absolute or relative to the domestic production, as to be a substantial cause of serious injury or threat thereof to the domestic industry.”

WTO provisions and the Anti-Dumping Act of 1999, Republic Act No. 8752, say, “Anti-dumping duty can be imposed if the export price of a commodity is less than its ‘normal value’ in the exporting country and is causing or threatening to cause injury to a domestic industry.”

It is a little harder to avail of these remedies but the remedies are much larger and more effective than what a special safeguard duty can offer. The suggestion could be for the DA to start looking into these options.

3. This is critical—emergency relief in the form of direct cash assistance from government.

Government saw the need for cash assistance in the tariffication law albeit to be effected should there be an excess from the P10 billion collected annually. We must revisit this policy of waiting for the excess of P10 billion.

A 2015 PIDS study by Briones and Tolin recommends that every farmer gets P19,000 a year cash assistance.

4. We can also use tariffs over P10 billion for whatever a farmer’s need. But our proposal is for emergency cash assistance.

For this year 2019, there is an unprogrammed P10 billion for RCEF in the GAA. It is highly unlikely for PhilMech to absorb the 50%—or P5 billion—of the tariff this year. It is also highly unlikely that the PhilRice will be able to absorb the P3 billion for inbred rice seeds development, propagation and promotion this year. *Ibigay na natin ang P10 billion na ito direkta sa magsasaka.*

Dagdag dito, mayroon nang nakolektang taripa na P10 bilyong din sa pagpasok ng halos 2.4 million tons of imported rice nitong 2019. Given na P60 billion ang nawala sa bulsa mismo ng ating mga magsasaka, unahin na natin sila pati na rin sa P10 billion na nakolektang taripa.

We also propose to file a joint resolution to amend the law—Republic Act No. 11203—to allow the use of tariff for the immediate cash assistance to farmers.

5. *Para naman sa ating mga consumers,* the Price Act allows for the DTI to issue suggested retail prices for the guidance of manufacturers. It also empowers the government to go after price manipulators. We must mobilize the DTI in order to put in place a monitoring of rice prices, and in fact, and perhaps, impose a suggested retail price for rice.

6. We ask the Philippine Competition Commission to investigate existing rice importers if they are taking advantage of their collective dominance in the market by engaging in exploitative acts. *Kung mapatunayang dinadaya nila ang mga consumers at ang ating mga magsasaka, dapat silang managot.*

7. *Atasan ang Department of Agriculture and Agriculture Credit Policy Council na pabilisin ang pagpapautang nang walang interest sa mga rice farmers ng hanggang P25,000 sa ilalim ng Survival and Recovery Loan (SURE) Assistance.*

8. Provide emergency employment for distressed farmers through the DSWD’s Cash for Work Program.

Now, during the lean season, *tag-gutom ang mga rice farmers. Ngayon pa lamang, bagsak na ang presyo.* How much more *pagdating ng bulto ng harvest at supply simula ngayong Setyembre kung kailan hamak na mas marami na nga ang supply sa merkado?* *Kapag malaki ang supply, bagsak ang presyo.*

Hindi kaya ng mga magsasaka na malugi nang maraming beses. Mga dalawang beses lamang sila malugi, baka hindi na po sila magtanim muli.

Finally, wherever there is a problem in the rice industry, government’s response and intervention is in the market. The same happened with the tariffication law. *Dapat ang government intervention should be in production.* While we propose stop-gap measures, long-term strategic interventions should be on the production side.

Dapat ang response ng gobyerno ay doon kung saan nag-uugat ang problema—sa produksyon. Ang pinaka-basic na dahilan kung bakit doble sa Vietnam at Thailand ang cost of production natin ay dahil mahal ang abono, pestisido, at gasolina dahil ito ay mga imported lahat. At iyong na nga, hindi rin totoo sa maraming lugar na libre irigasyon. Dahil sa hindi tamang pagpapatupad ng Free Irrigation Law, hindi na rin libre ang irigasyon.

Pero hindi lamang irigasyon, hindi lamang cost of production ang problema. Ang kaibahan ng Vietnam at Thailand sa Pilipinas, kinikilala nila, nirerespeto nila, inaaruga, at sinusuportahan nila ang mga magsasaka. Kinikilala nila ang kahalagahan ng mga magsasaka. Sa atin, hindi pa tayo naroroon sa ganoong klaseng pagkilala.

Because the bigger issue is food security. How can we have food security when we are dependent on food imports?

Kung nalulugi ang farmers dahil sobrang baba ang bilihin ng palay, gaya ng nabanggit ko kanina, hindi na sila magtatanim. Kapag hindi na sila mag-tanim, bababa ang rice sufficiency level natin. Dahil dito, lalong lalaki ang ating demand for imported rice with other countries importing as well.

The Philippines is one of the largest importers of rice in the world. *Kapag lumaki nang lumaki ang demand at ang supply sa world market ay ganoon pa rin, tataas ang presyo ng bigas. Kapag nangyari ito, namatay na ang ating mga magsasaka, bumalik pa tayo ulit sa mataas na presyo ng bigas. Kaya para hindi tayo umabot sa sitwasyong patay na ang kabayo, ayusin natin ang apat na damo para mabuhay ang ating rice farmers at ang rice industry.*

The impoverished situation of our farmers goes back to the time of Spanish colonization to the time of the Hukbalahap to today. One failed promise after another has brought us here. Even the promise to prepare our rice farmers for an eventual free trade regime under the WTO, much still has to happen. *Hindi ito panahon ng sisihan; panahon ito ng pagkilos para sagipin ang ating sakahan at ang ating magsasaka.*

I have to press on the urgency of the situation; the main harvest will start in September. If nothing is done, we are told, the fear is palay prices will plummet to P7 per kilo. This can create social and political problems. We are proposing solutions because criticisms are obviously not going to work and will not help our farmers.

Let me end with a reminder from my daughter Frankie, when she was nine years old: "We must treat our farmers like our parents," she said, "because they are the ones who feed us." Our farmers, our parents, are starving and desperate. They need for us to act now.

Maraming salamat at magandang hapon sa kanilang lahat.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR VILLAR

Senator Villar, chair of the Committee on Agriculture, clarified that the government did not choose to liberalize the importation of rice. She related that the country signed the WTO agreement in 1995 which gave the country 22 years to control the importation of rice and make the rice farmers competitive so that by 2017, when the quantitative restriction on importation of rice would be lifted, they would have presumably met the challenge. However, she lamented that the policy did not work because nobody worked to make the farmers competitive; and when the time came to liberalize the importation of rice after 22 years, the farmers were not competitive to meet the challenge.

She explained that the country should honor its commitment when it signed the WTO Agreement by liberalizing the importation of rice. Thus, she stated that the President asked Congress to legislate the Tarification bill. She clarified that it is not the farmers who will be imposed rice tariff but rather the imported rice such as those coming from Vietnam, which is the country's biggest supplier of rice.

Senator Villar said that based on the country's agreement with ASEAN a tariff of 35% should be imposed if the import came from an ASEAN member nation; thus, the assumption that the price of rice might increase by P7 per kilo by September would not happen because the cost of rice in Vietnam is already P6, without counting the 35% tariff and the additional transportation cost.

Senator Villar explained that under the Rice Tarification Law, the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund was provided with an automatic allocation of P10 billion a year in the General Appropriations Act regardless of whether or not there would be collections from the Bureau of Customs. The rice farmers are already assured of P10 billion, she said.

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Senator Villar stated that based on a study by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), the labor cost in Vietnam is only P120 while the labor cost in the Philippines is P460; and local farming is not mechanized unlike in Vietnam which is highly mechanized. To address this disadvantage, she said that 50% or P5 billion of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund was given to PhilMech which was tasked to give P500 million worth of equipment each of the rice-producing towns to enable them to mechanize and lower the present labor cost of P460 to P1.

Aside from mechanization, Senator Villar said that the PIDS study also suggested improvement of seeds and irrigation. However, she said that in terms of impact, improving irrigation would only have P0.50 impact on the cost of rice production while improving seeds would have a higher impact on labor cost and rice production; thus, PhilRice was given the necessary funding, especially since the agency had discovered inbred seed that could increase the production of farmers from four metric tons to six metric tons per hectare which is about 50% increase. She also averred that instead of giving them seeds, farmers should be taught how to produce their own inbred seeds, allowing them to become seed growers at the same time.

As to why funds were allocated for credit to farmers through LandBank and DBP, Senator Villar said that the Committee did not want the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) to experience the fate of the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) which suffered P8 billion losses. She believed that it is more secure to give it to LandBank and DBP than to the Congress and the DA because banks are liable to the BSP in the event of any irregularity.

As regards the P1 billion budget given to the LGU for the extension program, Senator Villar said that it was transferred to TESDA which would subsidize the tuition of those farmers who would take courses such as mechanization and inbred seed production in farm schools in the country. Meanwhile, she said that the money given to PhilMech, PhilRice and ATI would be used for training the trainers.

Senator Villar explained that while the Rice Tariffication Act was passed and the Rice Enhancement Competitiveness Fund was established in February 2019, both were not immediately imple-

mented because of the delay in the enactment of the 2019 budget. Since the budget was just recently implemented, she urged the DBM to get back the P5 billion which it gave to the DA in anticipation of the passage of the law and allocate it instead to the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund even as she was told the DA could no longer account for the P5 billion fund.

Senator Villar believed that only the cartels and the NFA and not the small farmers are the ones opposing the Rice Tariffication Law because they lost power and control in and stopped profiting from importation. And she questioned how the NFA was able to import and who authorized it since under the law, it is no longer allowed to import and is limited only to its P7 billion working capital. She then asked that an investigation on the matter be conducted. Under the law, she said that the President has a special power to do something if there is an emergency. She also pointed out the need to conduct an investigation on the implementation of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund especially that the Department of Agriculture had declared its intention to provide cash-for-work program to farmers.

She believed that the RCEF must not be reduced because it is the only way that will make rice farmers in the country competitive. She explained that since the life span of the RCEF is six years, farmers could not be expected to already be competitive during the first year.

As regards of over-importation, Senator Villar recalled the DA as saying that they will invoke its phytosanitary power. In fact, she believed that there are many other ways to stop the over-importation.

Senator Villar recalled that in 2014, she conducted hearings on issues involving the NFA and the cartel, but despite referring the committee's findings to the DOJ and even passing a law declaring large-scale agricultural smuggling as economic sabotage and non-bailable, nothing happened and no one was prosecuted and imprisoned. She believed that instead of prosecuting the smugglers, the government just need to do developmental works that would make the farming industry in the country competitive and profitable.

RESPONSE OF SENATOR PANGILINAN

Senator Pangilinan explained that his privilege speech was actually a call for an inquiry into how the Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund should be



implemented so as to support the farmers in the country. He agreed that the RCEF is precisely in the law because Congress and the government recognized that the rice farmers would be adversely affected by the inflow of imported rice. However, he doubted whether the law was being implemented effectively to cushion the impact of the liberalization of rice importation. He stated that his eight-point action steps are all consistent with the country's commitment to the WTO, and he believed that there should be further discussions on how to better address the plight of the rice farmers. For instance, he suggested revisiting the cash assistance provision of the law which states that whatever collected in excess of P10 billion would be available for cash assistance but subject to the Congress' approval. Relative thereto, he asked whether the collected amount since January 2019 to July 2019 was already more than P10 billion and whether the assistance should be given immediately or after the P10 billion has been collected.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS

At the outset, Senator Hontiveros thanked Senator Pangilinan for raising the urgency for an effective implementation of the Rice Tariffication Law and the adverse impact it may have on the farmers in the country. However, she believed that the Rice Tariffication Law concerns not only the farmers but also the consumers, and she noted that the law has been slow in providing accessible and affordable rice for consumers and in making farmers competitive.

Senator Pangilinan stated that he too wanted to find first the missing P5 billion allocated for RCEF and determine whether such fund has truly benefited the farmers in the country. But Senator Hontiveros contended that aside from the missing fund, there was already a P5-billion fund before the passage of the Rice Tariffication law which is part of the rice program of the DA apart from the P10 billion earlier mentioned and apart from the budget allocated to RCEF. Senator Pangilinan agreed, saying that under the GAA, P10 billion was allocated to RCEF.

At this point, Senator Villar clarified that the missing P5-billion fund was already part of the P10 billion which was released early part of 2019 in anticipation of the passage of the law. Moreover, she said that another P5 billion was released in July 2019 which was supposed to be part of the RCEF but was used by DA in its rice program. Saying that the DA

has P7 billion budget every year for the rice program, she maintained that the Department should use its own budget for the rice program and return the P5 billion intended for RCEF.

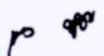
In effect, Senator Pangilinan noted that P7 billion was earmarked for the rice program aside from the P10 billion unprogrammed allocation for Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) for this year.

Senator Villar said that even if the Department of Agriculture disagrees with how the RCEF is being utilized, they must follow what was mandated in the law and just use the P7 billion rice program allocation to buy hybrid rice and fertilizer, for instance. She pointed out that there was also a P28-billion DSWD allocation to provide rice for CCT beneficiaries. Thus, she maintained that there are various sources to buy rice from small farmers and that there must be a strict utilization of those cited budgets to soften the impact of rice importation.

At this juncture, Senator Hontiveros remarked that she would seek further clarification on the nature and providence of the P5-billion allocation during the budget debate for the Department of Agriculture.

To the statement of Senator Pangilinan that the most significant part that the Rice Tariffication Law should implement is the provision of safety nets to rice farmers, Senator Hontiveros observed that while the objective of the law is clear among the consumers, there has been a showing of an immediate and negative effect impact to rice farmers that calls for safety nets considering a July 2019 data which indicated that the actual magnitude of losses on the ground is P60 billion as against the P10 billion RCEF budget.

Asked if he would agree to a proposal for a bigger and more realistic amount for the RCEF budget, Senator Pangilinan explained that the issue on direct cash assistance to rice farmers was actually proposed by Senator Recto during the deliberation of the Rice Tariffication Law but which was unfortunately not carried. He hoped to revisit the said discussion so that the P10 billion unprogrammed funds could be proposed as direct cash assistance to rice farmers as he believed that granting bigger direct cash assistance would immediately benefit the rice farmers as they are the ones who are currently reeling from the depressed prices of palay year on year to the tune of P60 billion. Senator Hontiveros expressed support for Senator Pangilinan's proposal.



Senator Villar clarified that the direct cash assistance was not removed from the law; in fact, there is a provision stating that if the money collected from tariffication would be more than P10 billion, it could be used as cash assistance to the farmers. As of today, she noted that the Department of Agriculture has collected P6.5 billion in tariff after six months, or P13 billion per year. She supposed that the excess P3 billion can be used as cash assistance to the farmers but there must be an authority through the General Appropriations Act.

Noting that it was impossible for inflation rate to decline without a decrease in the price of rice, Senator Villar advised everyone to be more discerning on who wrote those unfavorable press releases.

Senator Pangilinan clarified that the data came from a PSA report which actually showed that the price of rice went slightly lower at P1.83/kilo compared to the projected P7 to P10 per kilo reduction in price. He said that since the prices of *palay* decreased at P4 per kilo, the farmer's income also lessened by half. He believed that if the issue would be taken up during the budget debates, it would take six to seven months before the budget could actually be implemented. In consideration of the imminent damage caused to the rice farmers, he believed that based on the provision of law, a joint resolution may be approved by both Houses granting cash assistance from excess collected tariffs.

Senator Hontiveros said that while there has been a reduction in the price of rice, it only dropped at P2 per kilo instead of the targeted reduction of P7 to P10 per kilo during the deliberations. She noted that the law has seemingly failed in its objective of reducing the price of rice in the market, and worse, she further noted that while the price of rice was reduced by P2 per kilo, the income of rice farmers likewise decreased at P3.72 per kilo.

Senator Pangilinan said that this is where his suggestion must come in: for the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) to study whether there are traders and middlemen who take steps in keeping the price of rice high even though the price of *palay* drops especially when milled at 65% efficiency. He explained that when a kilo of *palay* bought at P17 is milled, the price of rice is usually doubled (P34/kilo), but in reality, he noted, there was a huge mark-up in the price of rice as it was being sold at P42 per kilo which prompted Rep. Stella Quimbo to

instruct the PCC to look into the possible manipulation in the prices of rice.

Regarding the necessity to review the P10-billion RCEF in view of a defect in the way the fund was designed as it is directly channeled to the attached agencies instead of the DA, Senator Pangilinan noted that besides the reallocation, the absorptive capacity of the agencies would also be questioned because the usual experience among agencies like the PCA was that their billions of funds could not be expended in one year such that it was even carried over to the succeeding years. Thereupon, he requested looking into the absorptive capacity of agencies per year so that the unused funds could be realigned for other purpose, like cash assistance to rice farmers.

Asked by Senator Hontiveros if there is a need to ask the DA for a timeline and a step-by-step process of releasing the funds, Senator Pangilinan said that the appointment of Mr. Dar as the new agriculture secretary was a good development, noting that Secretary Dar's first pronouncement was to address the disbursement of the RCEF.

As regards his proposed steps to address the present emergency situation, such as putting in place agricultural special safeguards and anti-dumping duties, Senator Pangilinan said that the law empowers the DA secretary to put such measures in place. He hoped that his proposals would be tackled by the economic managers and the agriculture secretary so that the administration may provide immediate relief to the rice farmers and the rice industry.

As to his proposed step to immediately undertake a survival and recovery loan facility for the rice farmers, Senator Pangilinan stated that the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC), an attached agency of the DA, could immediately undertake it, making available P25,000 without interest to the farmers.

At this juncture, Senator Hontiveros thanked Senator Pangilinan for his urgent contemplation of how the Rice Tarification Law could be ostensibly implemented for the good of the consumers.

Senator Pangilinan recalled meeting a 74-year old Isabela farmer who had been planting rice since he was 12 years old but remained poor even after being in the same livelihood for six decades. He believed that the Senate ought to act on the problem

problem of the farming industry in return for the sacrifice of generations of rice farmers who have fed the nation.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATE PRESIDENT SOTTO

At this juncture, Senate President Sotto recalled that in 1994, six senators, namely, Wigberto Tañada, Ernesto Macea, Vicente Sotto III, Francisco Tatad, Arturo Tolentino and Dominique Coseteng, voted against the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade of the World Trade Organization (GATT-WTO) because they foresaw the issues raised by Senator Pangilinan and believed that the agreement would be detrimental to the farmers. The current situation, he noted, proved that they were correct after all.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the privilege speech of Senator Pangilinan as well as the manifestations and interpellation thereon were referred to the Committee on Agriculture and Food.

COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIRMANSHIPS

As manifested by Senator Zubiri, the following senators were designated vice-chairpersons of the committees hereunder indicated:

Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs

Senator Lacson
Senator Go

Committee on Peace, Unification and Reconciliation

Senator Go
Senator Pimentel

Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement

- *Urban Planning* – Senator Go
- *Housing sector* – Senator Pacquiao
- *Resettlement sector* – Senator Lapid

Committee on Local Government

Senator Marcos

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR HONTIVEROS

Availing herself of the privilege hour, Senator Hontiveros called the Body's attention to the plight of Muslim Filipinos still suffering in evacuation centers more than two years after the Marawi siege.

The full text of her speech follows:

Yesterday, many of us were enjoying a day off from work and school as we joined our Muslim sisters and brothers in celebration of *Eid al-Adha* or the Festival of Sacrifice commemorating the story of God appearing before Ibrahim or Abraham commanding him to sacrifice his son as an act of obedience. As one of the most important holidays in the Islamic calendar, Muslim families celebrated by gathering for specially-prepared meals, visiting friends and relatives, while children are usually given money and new clothes as gifts. But as this joyous event was being celebrated all over the world, I was also sadly reminded of the situation of our Muslim *kababayans* still suffering in evacuation centers in Marawi and in the two provinces of Lanao, more than two years after the Marawi siege.

I do not think anybody will disagree with me when I say life in an evacuation center, if we could call it that—"life"—is hard. Imagine the cramped living arrangements and the lack of privacy, the heat, the noise, the smell and the unsanitary conditions, and the shortage in food and scarce supply of clean water. All of these are in and of themselves, problems. But these difficulties breed a complex of other problems as obvious as the dearth of livelihood opportunities.

There are also the less immediately visible ordeals internally displaced persons (IDPs) have to go through. Take the case of a 16-year old who a news article hid behind the name "Fatima." Fatima and her family fled Marawi when fighting broke out between government forces and the Maute in May 2017. They ended up in an evacuation center in Soguiaran, Lanao del Sur. Their makeshift cubicle in the town's function hall, just like any other living space in many evacuation centers, is made of *malong*, blankets, tarpaulins, and pieces of plywood strung together to give them a little privacy. Crudely constructed toilets and bathrooms are unsegregated. Under these conditions, Fatima found herself sexually assaulted by a boy who entered their living quarters on two occasions



while she was all alone. After she repelled the boy twice, a group of teenagers who Fatima believes were the boy's friends ganged-up and beat her up. Despite her reporting these incidents to authorities, the perpetrators went punished.

Poor living conditions in evacuation centers, such as the lack of electricity, increases the vulnerabilities of women and children to gender-based violence. An assessment conducted jointly by the UN and other non-government organizations in partnership with local and national government agencies revealed that 45% of the areas hosting the internally displaced in Marawi, Lanao del Sur, and Lanao del Norte reported that girls were the most affected by sexual violence with those over the age of 14 as the most vulnerable. Cases of violence can also lead to sexual and reproductive health outcomes such as unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, and other mental health psycho-social consequences like depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress. We should also note with alarm the culture of silence bred by the cultural taboo that accompanies gender-based violence. Many of these incidents remain underreported because of the stigma, the apparent shame and dishonor they bring to the family of the victim. As a result, there are instances in which the victim, as a way to save face and restore the family honor, is even forced to marry her abuser.

These are the situations facing women and girls in evacuation centers, and I am sure men face their own challenges as well. As of April 2019, the UNHCR or the UN Refugee Agency reported that 1,092 families were still in evacuation centers, 2,157 families in transitory shelters, and 22,574 families were home-based IDPs. Of the 4,852 transitory shelters that Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM) plans to build, only 36% of the structures have been completed. The slow progress in reaching the target has been blamed on the scarcity of land in Marawi and the difficulty in securing permits for borrowed property for construction to start. While these dilemmas are always part of post-conflict reconstruction, I hope the Task Force is reminded that they have the full backing of State power and infrastructure, and can also find ample support from the private sector and different non-government entities, and foreign governments. They only have to think of the almost 40,000 families who are still in need of decent housing and to return to their homes.

This is the clamor amplified in the State of the Marawi Bakwit or SOMBak 2019 mounted by the IDPs led by the Moro Consensus Group on

the same day the President delivered his own State of the Nation Address. There, *bakwits* took turns describing their miserable living conditions over the last two years. Those living in tents that are intended to last for only six months are no longer provided with adequate protection against the elements. *Sabi nga ng isang nagsalitang bakwit, bukod sa manipis at mabaho na iyong bahay nilang trapal, kapag tirik na ang araw ay hindi na nila matagalang ang init sa loob ng tent. At sa gabling malamig naman ang panahon, sobra naman ang lamig.* Also, the ordinary wear and tear on these canvass shelters have made them too light and delicate to sufficiently protect the *bakwit* from the wind and rain.

These are the reasons why I joined them in their dismay, even frustration, that the President made no mention of the Marawi rehabilitation in his most anticipated SONA speech. Instead, his only reference to Marawi was on the problem of illegal drugs. *Ako rin po ay nagtataka,* Mr. President, that in his most important address to the nation, the President overlooked a very significant part of the country's national situation. After all, it is still fresh in our collective memory as it was not too long ago that he ordered the military assault and bombardment that displaced almost 370,000 individuals, and left Marawi in ruins with damages estimated at P11.5 billion and losses at P7 billion. And this is not counting the P72 billion required to rebuild the city according to Finance Secretary Dominguez.

Access to clean water and sanitation are a constant problem in evacuation centers and transitory sites. In Sagonsongan and Sarimanok Tent City, non-government organizations provide the trucks that supply them water. However, by the end of June 2019, a couple of months ago, one of these NGOs already ceased its operation in the area. Some septic tanks are already full, and needs desludging. Some latrines have to be closed because of insufficient water supply. Water is one of our basic human needs as human beings. *Tayo nga po dito sa Maynila ay hirap kapag ilang oras nawawalan ng tubig. Isipin na lamang natin ang kalagayan ng mga bakwit ng Marawi na dalawang taon nang walang maayos na pagkuhanan ng tubig, na ultimong pagsipilyo at paghilamos ay hindi regular na magagawa.* And I need not say the health risks brought about by the lack of water and proper sanitation. *Kaya marami na ring nagkakasakit sa mga evacuation centers.* As reported in the Asian Development Bank's Emergency Assistance for Reconstruction and

Recovery of Marawi, there have been civilian fatalities in shelters and health facilities due to pneumonia, sepsis, and complications brought about by acute gastroenteritis.

Another key challenge to the IDPs of Marawi is access to information. While they receive information on schedules of distribution of assistance and *Kathanor* or profiling activities, information does not regularly reach the 23,000 families living in home-based shelters, especially those located in remote areas. In my consultation with IDPs and visit to an evacuation center in Iligan a few months after the siege, some of the *bakwits* told me that the *Meranaos*, as a people of pride, many would rather live with relatives under extremely inconvenient conditions than stay in evacuation centers. This is why many IDPs are considered home-based as they are being housed by their relatives by the dozens in small and cramped spaces. It is this scattered situation of IDPs that poses a challenge not only to information dissemination, but also to the distribution of assistance.

While we talk about the IDP situation in various evacuation centers and other forms of temporary shelter, and their desire to go back to their homes and pick-up the pieces of their traumatized lives, I am surprised to learn that government has no plans of paying for the construction of their houses and buildings destroyed in the fighting. Allow me to show you a short video clip of an interview with Sec. Eduardo del Rosario, chairperson of Task Force Bangon Marawi.

At this juncture, a news video clip of an interview with Task force Bangon Marawi chairperson Eduardo del Rosario was presented before the members.

It troubles me that Marawi residents, private residents cannot expect the government to pay for the damage government itself has caused, levelling their private homes and other buildings and making them uninhabitable and unusable. And to add insult to injury, and extending this appalling response, residents will have to secure a permit to repair or construct their houses by going through an application process that requires quite a number of documents, entailing substantial cost in the process.

Among the documents they have to present are land titles and deeds that include a certified copy of the Transfer Certificate of Title, Tax Declaration of the lot, Real Property Tax of the current year, plus construction plans, zoning

receipts, barangay clearance, and Bureau of Internal Revenue clearance. Construction plans must be officially attested to by an engineer and an architect, by a registered electrical engineer in case of an electrical plan, by a registered mechanical engineer in case of a mechanical plan, and by a registered sanitary engineer or master plumber in case of a sanitation plan. These professional services do not come for free, neither are they cheap. Why are we making it harder for our Marawi sisters and brothers to rebuild their homes? It is not as if they have not suffered enough. And to top it all off, they cannot expect any compensation from government for the destruction of their homes.

More than two years after the siege, Marawi residents have yet to get their lives back together. There are those who could no longer wait for government's promise to rebuild their devastated city, and just opted to relocate and try their luck elsewhere. But there are more of those who are left with very little options but to struggle it out in evacuation centers, trying to hang on to their dream of returning to their homes and continuing with their lives.

Here in the Senate, I am very heartened by the fact that our good Majority Leader, Senator Zubiri, has filed Senate Resolution No. 66 reconstituting the Special Committee on the Marawi Rehabilitation. That being said, I look forward to and commit my active participation in committee deliberations.

I also call on Task Force Bangon Marawi to ease the hardships of the IDPs by ensuring that they are adequately consulted on the city's rehabilitation and reconstruction plans, by accelerating the rebuilding process particularly the construction of permanent housing and other vital infrastructure, and in this process of reconstruction guaranteeing respect for the Maranao culture and way of life.

It is my hope that we do not give Eid al-Adha or the Feast of Sacrifice a new meaning by asking the IDPs of Marawi to sacrifice even more. They did not deserve this displacement, they did not deserve to have their lives turned upside down. They have sacrificed enough.

Maraming pong salamat.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR TOLENTINO

Senator Tolentino believed that even though the Marawi rehabilitation was not directly mentioned in his recent State of the Nation Address, the inclusion in the President's legislative agenda of the establish-



ment of the Department of Disaster Management and a department for water, and the newly established Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development were proof that the President accords utmost importance to areas in need of rehabilitation including Marawi.

At this juncture, Senator Tolentino suggested to refer the privilege speech of Senator Hontiveros to the Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement to synchronize current efforts to establish a Department of Disaster Management with the newly established Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development. He informed the Body that during the initial committee hearing, he required the interim secretary, General Del Rosario, to furnish the committee the available public lands suitable for housing which would include available public lands for the Marawi evacuees.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR ZUBIRI

Senator Zubiri stated that as the principal sponsor of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, the plight of the Marawi evacuees is closed to his heart. He lamented how little progress could be seen in Marawi despite a plan of action in place, with the Chinese contractor backing out, hence delaying rehabilitation. He suggested that the Body proceed with its plan to set up an *Ad Hoc* Committee on Marawi Rehabilitation and Reconstruction. He said that the Committee on Rules would consider the proposal during its meeting regarding the rationalization of committees.

Senator Zubiri thanked Senator Hontiveros for bringing up the issue, pointing out that the efforts of Congress are geared toward peace, as can be gleaned in the passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law. He believed that there would always be tension among Maranaos who still could not return to their original settlements.

Senator Zubiri said that he initially wanted to refer Senator Hontivero's speech to the Committee on Rules for it to be able to set up an ad hoc committee. Noting, however, that it could take a few more weeks, he agreed to the motion of Senator Tolentino to refer the speech to the Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement so that the hearings could be conducted immediately to determine the plan of action for said areas. He cautioned that another Marawi incident could happen if Congress does not act swiftly to address the matter.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEE

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of Senator Hontiveros to the Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Zubiri, the session was suspended.

It was 4:47 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:53 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:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 651, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 652, entitled

AN ACT RATIONALIZING AGRICULTURE EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES BY ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF AGRICULTURE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, PROVIDING FOR MECHANISMS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 653, entitled

AN ACT TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF THE PHILIPPINE FILM INDUSTRY, CREATING FOR THIS PURPOSE THE PHILIPPINE FILM COMMISSION, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Public Information and Mass Media; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 654, entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM FOR AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY GENERATION AND TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Agriculture and Food; Science and Technology; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 655, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THE OFFICE OF TANODBATA AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 656, entitled

AN ACT ENCOURAGING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, PROVIDING INCENTIVES THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 657, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THE POSITION OF BARANGAY NUTRITION WORKER IN EVERY BARANGAY PROVIDING INCENTIVES THERETO, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1569

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Health and Demography; Local Government; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 658, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A REHABILITATION CENTER FOR JUVENILE RUGBY USERS, PROVIDING FOR PENALTIES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs; Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 659, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING USED CAR DEALERS TO PROVIDE CONSUMERS WITH A WRITTEN WARRANTY AGAINST DEFECTS AND REQUIRING PRIVATE SELLERS TO DISCLOSE ANY KNOWN USE OR SAFETY DEFECTS

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship

Senate Bill No. 660, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR A HOUSING PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

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To the Committees on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement; Basic Education, Arts and Culture; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 661, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING GOLF CLUBS TO PROVIDE SOCIAL SECURITY AND WELFARE BENEFITS TO GOLF CADDIES AND OTHER RELATED SERVICE WORKERS THROUGH A SHARED CONTRIBUTION SCHEME

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 662, entitled

AN ACT EXPANDING THE COVERAGE OF THE MANDATORY BASIC IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM AND PROVIDING A SYSTEM IN THE DETERMINATION OF OTHER TYPES OF VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10152, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "MANDATORY INFANTS AND CHILDREN HEALTH IMMUNIZATION ACT OF 2011"

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committee on Health and Demography

Senate Bill No. 663, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES TO SUBMIT A WRITTEN PERMISSION OR WAIVER IN FAVOR OF THE OMBUDSMAN TO LOOK INTO ALL DEPOSITS OF WHATEVER NATURE WITH BANKS OR BANKING INSTITUTIONS BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE PHILIPPINES INCLUDING INVESTMENTS BONDS ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES, ITS POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS AND

INSTRUMENTALITIES AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies

Senate Bill No. 664, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN INCREASE AND AN AUTOMATIC ADJUSTMENT MECHANISM IN THE PERSONNEL ECONOMIC RELIEF ALLOWANCE (PERA) GRANTED TO GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 665, entitled

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH) TO SET AND APPROVE THE BED CAPACITY OF ALL DOH HOSPITALS

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 666, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING PRENATAL LEAVE BENEFITS FOR FEMALE EMPLOYEES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality; and Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 667, entitled

AN ACT SEEKING TO PROTECT THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN GARBAGE COLLECTION, WORKING IN DUMP-

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SITES OR ASSIGNED IN DISASTER AREAS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 668, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING ALL GRADUATING ELEMENTARY, HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS TO PLANT AT LEAST TEN (10) TREES EACH AS A PREREQUISITE FOR GRADUATION AND FOR OTHER RELATED PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 669, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS FREE ADMISSION TO ALL PUBLIC MUSEUMS AND NATIONAL HISTORICAL SHRINES AND LANDMARKS

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture

Senate Bill No. 670, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING AUGUST 30 OF EVERY YEAR AS NATIONAL PRESS FREEDOM DAY

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committee on Public Information and Mass Media

Senate Bill No. 671, entitled

AN ACT POSTPONING THE MAY 2020 BARANGAY AND SANGGUNIANG

KABATAAN ELECTIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9164, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation; and Local Government

Senate Bill No. 672, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE OF THE PRESCRIBED INCREASES AND ADJUSTMENTS IN THE WAGE RATES OF WORKERS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6727, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "WAGE RATIONALIZATION ACT" AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 673, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING ARTICLE 83 OF THE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 674, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR MOTORCYCLE LANES ON ALL MAIN ROADS AND HIGHWAYS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Public Works; and Finance

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Senate Bill No. 675, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE RECRUITMENT QUOTA REQUIREMENT OF FEMALE PNP OFFICERS, AMENDING SECTION 58 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8551, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs; Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 676, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING HAZARD PAY TO COVERED EMPLOYEES OF THE GOVERNMENT AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 677, entitled

AN ACT RATIONALIZING GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN LABOR DISPUTES BY ADOPTING THE ESSENTIAL SERVICES CRITERIA IN THE EXERCISE OF THE ASSUMPTION OR CERTIFICATION POWER OF THE SECRETARY OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND DECRIMINALIZING VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 678, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING THAT ALL CONTRACTUAL AND CASUAL

EMPLOYEES IN THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE BE PAID CORRESPONDING WAGES DURING SPECIAL PUBLIC AND LOCAL HOLIDAYS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

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

Senate Bill No. 679, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING PARKING SPACE FROM MOTOR VEHICLE BUYERS IN METROPOLITAN AREAS AS A PRE-REQUISITE FOR THE PURCHASE OF A MOTOR VEHICLE AND REGISTRATION WITH THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO)

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship; and Public Services

Senate Bill No. 680, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH HOME VISITATION PROGRAM

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality; and Health and Demography

Senate Bill No. 681, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE DISSEMINATION OF FALSE INFORMATION ON BOMB THREATS, EXPLOSIVES, OR ANY OTHER LIFE-THREATENING OR DESTRUCTIVE MATERIALS AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs

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Senate Bill No. 682, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING INCENTIVES TO FILIPINO FILMMAKERS WHO WERE GRANTED HONORS IN NOTABLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVALS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.

To the Committees on Public Information and Mass Media; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 683, entitled

AN ACT PROTECTING THE REMITTANCES OR MONEY TRANSFERS OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs) BY REQUIRING THE DISCLOSURE OF FINANCE CHARGES AND OTHER FEES IN CONNECTION WITH MONEY TRANSFER, COMPELLING STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THEIR TRANSFER, PENALIZING VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

To the Committees on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies; and Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 684, entitled

AN ACT FURTHER PROMOTING THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY STRENGTHENING, EMPOWERING, AND ENHANCING THE FINANCING PROGRAMS FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6977, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "MAGNA CARTA FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs)" AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

To the Committees on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship; Economic Affairs; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 685, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

To the Committees on Science and Technology; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 686, entitled

AN ACT INTEGRATING PALLIATIVE AND HOSPICE CARE INTO THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

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

Senate Bill No. 687, entitled

AN ACT CREATING THE MINDANAO RAILWAYS CORPORATION PRESCRIBING ITS POWERS, FUNCTIONS, AND DUTIES, AND PROVIDING NECESSARY FUNDS FOR ITS OPERATION

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

To the Committees on Government Corporations and Public Enterprises; Public Services; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 688, entitled

AN ACT EXEMPTING DRUGS AND MEDICINES PRESCRIBED FOR MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS FROM VALUE-ADDED TAX, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 109 OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

To the Committee on Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 689, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION (SOGIE) AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Pangilinan

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

Senate Bill No. 690, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ON-SITE, IN-CITY OR NEAR-CITY RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM FOR INFORMAL SETTLER FAMILIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH A PEOPLE'S PLAN AND MANDATING RELOCATING LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS TO PROVIDE OTHER BASIC SERVICES AND LIVELIHOOD COMPONENTS IN FAVOR OF THE RECIPIENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7279, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING ACT OF 1992"

Introduced by Senator Pangilinan

To the Committees on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement; Local Government; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 691, entitled

AN ACT PRESCRIBING A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE EVICTION OF UNDERPRIVILEGED AND HOMELESS CITIZENS OR THE DEMOLITION OF THEIR DWELLINGS, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7279, OTHER-

WISE KNOWN AS THE "URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING ACT OF 1992"

Introduced by Senator Pangilinan

To the Committees on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 692, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A SYSTEM OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PEOPLE'S COUNCIL IN EVERY LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT, PRESCRIBING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

Introduced by Senator Pangilinan

To the Committees on Local Government; Electoral Reforms and People's Participation; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 693, entitled

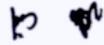
AN ACT TO ERADICATE CELLULAR PHONE-AIDED TERRORISM AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES MANDATING FOR THIS PURPOSE OWNERSHIP REGISTRATION OF ALL PRE-PAID SIM CARDS FOR CELLULAR PHONES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Pangilinan

To the Committees on Public Services; and Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship

Senate Bill No. 694, entitled

AN ACT DECLARING THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP OR THE REDEMPTORIST CHURCH (BACLARAN CHURCH) LOCATED ALONG ROXAS BOULEVARD, PARAÑAQUE CITY A HERITAGE SITE AND TOURIST DESTINATION AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR



Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr.	Senate Bill No. 698, entitled AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO SET AND APPROVE THE BED CAPACITY AND THE SERVICE CAPABILITY OF ALL DOH HOSPITALS
Senate Bill No. 695, entitled AN ACT TO INSTITUTIONALIZE THE BASIC SERVICE OF INTEGRATED SOLID WASTE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL IN ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991" AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES	Introduced by Senator Angara To the Committees on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; Tourism; and Finance
Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr. To the Committees on Local Government; and Environment and Natural Resources	Senate Bill No. 699, entitled AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SYSTEM, PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT, SUPERVISION AND REGULATION OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROFESSION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR
Senate Bill No. 696, entitled AN ACT REQUIRING THE RECYCLING AND UTILIZATION OF RECYCLED MATERIALS BY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	Introduced by Senator Angara To the Committees on Health and Demography; Local Government; and Finance
Introduced by Senator Revilla, Jr. To the Committees on Environment and Natural Resources; Basic Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance	Senate Bill No. 700, entitled AN ACT INTEGRATING PALLIATIVE AND HOSPICE CARE INTO THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
Senate Bill No. 697, entitled AN ACT PROHIBITING THE WITHHOLDING OF MUSLIM CADAVERS IN THE CUSTODY OF ANY HOSPITAL, MEDICAL CLINIC, FUNERAL PARLOR, MORGUE, OR OTHER SIMILAR FACILITIES ON GROUNDS ON NONPAYMENT OF HOSPITAL BILLS, MEDICAL EXPENSES, OR OTHER FEES, PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES	Introduced by Senator Angara To the Committees on Health and Demography; Ways and Means; and Finance
Introduced by Senator Pimentel III To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development	RESOLUTIONS Proposed Senate Resolution No. 72, entitled RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING THE PHILIPPINE DELEGATION TO THE 15TH INTERNATIONAL MATHEMATICS CONTEST FOR WINNING 27 GOLD MEDALS, 54 SILVER MEDALS AND 108 BRONZE MEDALS HELD LAST AUGUST 2-5, 2019 IN SINGAPORE

Introduced by Senator Lapid

To the Committee on Rules

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 73, entitled

RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTS OF CONTINUOUS RECRUITMENT BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES – NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY (CPP-NPA) OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE THEREBY RAISING AWARENESS TO ALL AND SAFEGUARDING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committees on National Defense and Security; and Cultural Communities

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 74, entitled

RESOLUTION TO CALLING FOR INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE STRATEGIC SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT BY FOREIGNERS OF FUGA, GRANDE, AND CHIQUITA ISLANDS AS WELL AS THE PROPERTY FORMERLY KNOWN AS ISLAND COVE RESORT

Introduced by Senator Hontiveros

To the Committees on National Defense and Security; and Government Corporations and Public Enterprises

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 75, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, TO STUDY THE PROPOSED GUIAMARAS-ILOILO-NEGROS OCCIDENTAL PROJECT, IN PARTICULAR ITS FINANCIAL COSTS AND LONG-TERM ECONOMIC BENEFITS, IN ORDER TO PROMOTE GREATER CONNECTIVITY AMONG THE PROVINCES

OF WESTERN VISAYAS, AND TO PROVIDE BETTER ACCESS TO LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS FOR FILIPINO PRODUCTS

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Economic Affairs; and Public Works

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 76, entitled

RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE IMPACT OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE KALIWA DAM PROJECT IN THE QUEZON PROVINCE, THEREBY SAFEGUARDING THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Introduced by Senator Marcos

To the Committees on Cultural Communities; and Public Works

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 701, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR FILM AND TELEVISION TOURISM IN THE PHILIPPINES, MARKETING THE INDUSTRY GLOBALLY AND PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT FOR THE SECTOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Angara

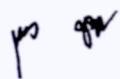
To the Committees on Public Information and Mass Media; Tourism; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 702, entitled

AN ACT REDUCING THE CORPORATE INCOME TAX RATE, AMENDING SECTIONS 27 AND 28 OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1997, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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- Introduced by Senator Angara
- To the Committee on Ways and Means**
- Senate Bill No. 703, entitled
- AN ACT MANDATING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY FROM INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS, THEREBY CREATING A SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE FOR THIS PURPOSE
- Introduced by Senator Angara
- To the Committees on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; and Public Order and Dangerous Drugs**
- Senate Bill No. 704, entitled
- AN ACT PROVIDING FOR RURAL EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR
- Introduced by Senator Angara
- To the Committees on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Finance**
- Senate Bill No. 705, entitled
- AN ACT DEFINING AND PROHIBITING SENIOR CITIZEN ABUSE, PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES
- Introduced by Senator Angara
- To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; and Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development; and Finance**
- Senate Bill No. 706, entitled
- AN ACT ESTABLISHING RESOURCE CENTERS FOR INDIGENOUS CUL-
- TURAL COMMUNITIES/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO ENHANCE AND ENSURE DELIVERY OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES
- Introduced by Senator Angara
- To the Committees on Cultural Communities; and Finance**
- Senate Bill No. 707, entitled
- AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE RISE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (PRDA), DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES
- Introduced by Senator Angara
- To the Committees on Economic Affairs; Ways and Means; and Finance**
- Senate Bill No. 708, entitled
- AN ACT REQUIRING THE PROVISION OF INFANT-FRIENDLY FACILITIES IN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS
- Introduced by Senator Villanueva
- To the Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality**
- Senate Bill No. 709, entitled
- AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A PERMANENT APPOINTMENT TO ALL CASUAL AND CONTRACTUAL EMPLOYEES OF THE GOVERNMENT WHO HAVE RENDERED THE PRESCRIBED YEARS OF SERVICE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES
- Introduced by Senator Villanueva
- To the Committee on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation**



Senate Bill No. 710, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE MAXIMIZATION OF BENEFITS FROM FINITE MINERALS AND MINERAL PRODUCTS AND QUARRY RESOURCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Environment and Natural Resources; Local Government; and Ways and Means

Senate Bill No. 711, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 16 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7610, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9231, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE SPECIAL PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST CHILD ABUSE, EXPLOITATION AND DISCRIMINATION ACT

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development; and Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality

Senate Bill No. 712, entitled

AN ACT RATIONALIZING GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS IN LABOR DISPUTES BY ADOPTING THE ESSENTIAL SERVICES CRITERIA IN THE EXERCISE OF THE ASSUMPTION OR CERTIFICATION POWER OF THE SECRETARY OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND DECIMINALIZING VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 278[263], 279[264] and 287[272] OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 442, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AS AMENDED AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 713, entitled

AN ACT ENSURING SAFE DRINKING WATER, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 856, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE CODE ON SANITATION OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 714, entitled

AN ACT FURTHER STRENGTHENING WORKERS' RIGHT TO SELF-ORGANIZATION, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 240[234](c), 242[235], 243[236], 244[237] AND 285[270] OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 715, entitled

AN ACT LOWERING THE OPTIONAL RETIREMENT AGE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS FROM SIXTY (60) YEARS OLD TO FIFTY-FIVE (55) YEARS OLD, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 13-A OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8291 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM ACT OF 1997

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Government Corporations and Public Enterprises; and Civil

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Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation

Senate Bill No. 716, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING CAMPUS HOUSING TO TENURED FACULTY MEMBERS IN STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

To the Committees on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education; Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 717, entitled

AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM AND PROVIDING JOB OPPORTUNITIES TO INMATES IN DETENTION FACILITIES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Villanueva

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

Senate Bill No. 718, entitled

AN ACT BANNING THE SALE, PURCHASE, POSSESSION, TRANSPORTATION, IMPORTATION, AND EXPORTATION OF SHARK FIN AND FOOD CONTAINING SHARK FIN

Introduced by Senator Pimentel III

To the Committees on Agriculture and Food; and Environment and Natural Resources

Senate Bill No. 719, entitled

AN ACT EXPANDING THE POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE MOVIE AND TELEVISION REVIEW AND CLASSIFICATION BOARD TO PROVIDE FOR THE REGULATION

OF VIDEO GAMES AND OUTDOOR MEDIA, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1986

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Public Information and Mass Media

Senate Bill No. 720, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING PROTECTION TO THE ELDERLY AGAINST ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND EXPLOITATION, AND PRESCRIBING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

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

Senate Bill No. 721, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE USE OF ON-BODY CAMERAS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS DURING ANY ANTI-ILLEGAL DRUG AND CRIMINALITY OPERATIONS, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 722, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR STIFFER PENALTIES FOR WILFUL OR INDISCRIMINATE DISCHARGE OF FIREARMS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ACT NO. 3815, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs



Senate Bill No. 723, entitled

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF MOTOR VEHICLES WITHOUT MUFFLERS OR THOSE THAT ARE DEFECTIVE OR HAVE BEEN MODIFIED WHICH INCREASE THE SOUND EMITTED BY MOTOR VEHICLES, PENALIZING OWNERS AND DRIVERS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO NOISE POLLUTION IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Public Services; Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 724, entitled

AN ACT BANNING THE SALE, DISTRIBUTION, AND USE OF FIRE-CRACKERS AND OTHER PYRO-TECHNIC DEVICES, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs; and Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship

Senate Bill No. 725, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT AND MANAGEMENT CENTER, DEFINING ITS POWERS, FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Public Services; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 726, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTIONS 69, 261(CC) AND 264 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 881, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE OMNIBUS ELEC-

TION CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES, AS AMENDED, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation

Senate Bill No. 727, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS TO STUDENTS ENROLLING IN TEACHER EDUCATION AND PROVIDING INCENTIVES FOR TEACHING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

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

Senate Bill No. 728, entitled

AN ACT REGULATING THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF INTERNET CAFES, OR COMPUTER RENTAL SHOPS, AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS OFFERING COMPUTER SERVICES TO MINORS, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship; and Local Government

Senate Bill No. 729, entitled

AN ACT REGULATING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK SERVICES, IMPOSING AND AUTHORIZING FEES, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Public Services

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Senate Bill No. 730, entitled

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE BILL OF
RIGHTS OF TAXI PASSENGERS**

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Public Services

Senate Bill No. 731, entitled

**AN ACT REGULATING THE PLACE-
MENT AND CONTENT OF BILL-
BOARDS INCLUDING THEIR
SUPPORT STRUCTURES**

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

**To the Committees on Public Works; and
Public Information and Mass Media**

Senate Bill No. 732, entitled

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PHILIPPINE
HIGH SCHOOL FOR SPORTS AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

**To the Committees on Basic Education,
Arts and Culture; Sports; Ways and Means;
and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 733, entitled

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE INFORM-
ATION TECHNOLOGY OFFICE IN
EVERY MUNICIPALITY, CITY AND
PROVINCE AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES**

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

**To the Committees on Science and Tech-
nology; Local Government; and Finance**

Senate Bill No. 734, entitled

**AN ACT DECLARING THE PUNONG
BARANGAY AS DEEMED IPSO
FACTO RESIGNED UPON THE FILING
CERTIFICATE OF CANDIDACY,
REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE**

**REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9006, OTHER-
WISE KNOWN AS THE “FAIR
ELECTION ACT” AND BATAS
PAMBANSA BLG. 881, ENTITLED
“OMNIBUS ELECTION CODE OF
THE PHILIPPINES” AND OTHER
ELECTION RELATED LAWS**

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

**To the Committee on Electoral Reforms
and People's Participation**

Senate Bill No. 735, entitled

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A HUMAN
TRAFFICKING PREVENTION EDUCU-
TION PROGRAM FOR THE YOUTH
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR**

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Youth; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 736, entitled

**AN ACT MANDATING THE CREATION
OF A SCHOOL DISASTER MANAGE-
MENT COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT
SAFETY DRILLS FOR EMERGENCY
SITUATIONS IN ALL SCHOOLS**

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

**To the Committees on Basic Education,
Arts and Culture; and Higher, Technical and
Vocational Education**

Senate Bill No. 737, entitled

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NURSING
HOME FOR HOMELESS AND
ABANDONED SENIOR CITIZENS IN
EVERY CITY OR MUNICIPALITY
IN THE PHILIPPINES, APPRO-
PRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

**To the Committees on Social Justice,
Welfare and Rural Development; Local
Government; Ways and Means; and Finance**



Senate Bill No. 738, entitled

AN ACT LOWERING THE COMPULSORY AND OPTIONAL RETIREMENT AGE OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 13(b) AND 13-A OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8291, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM ACT OF 1997

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; and Government Corporations and Public Enterprises

Senate Bill No. 739, entitled

AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FOR DETERMINING STATUTORY RAPE TO PROVIDE STRONGER PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE ACT NO. 3815, AS AMENDED, ALSO KNOWN AS THE REVISED PENAL CODE

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

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

Senate Bill No. 740, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM OF EDUCATION FOR ADULTS, OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH, MEMBERS OF CULTURAL MINORITIES, INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; Youth; Ways and Means; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 741, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING AN ACCIDENT AND LIFE INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 742, entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE GUIDELINES FOR THE INSTALLATION OF THE CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION VIDEO (CCTV) AND THE PROCEDURE FOR ACCESS TO THE IMAGES

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs

Senate Bill No. 743, entitled

AN ACT MANDATING THE AUTOMATION OF A NATIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL DATABASE

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture

Senate Bill No. 744, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CONDONATION OF PENALTIES FOR UNPAID SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM CONTRIBUTIONS OF HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYERS RELATIVE TO REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7655, ENTITLED "AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE OF HOUSE-HELPERS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLE 143 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 442, AS AMENDED" AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10361, ALSO KNOWN AS THE "DOMESTIC WORKERS ACT" OR "BATAS KASAMBAHAY"

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Government Corporations and Public Enterprises; and Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development

Senate Bill No. 745, entitled

AN ACT REGULATING THE IMPOSI-

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TION OF FEES FOR THE USE OF PARKING SPACES AND FACILITIES IN SHOPPING MALLS, HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS AND SIMILAR ESTABLISHMENTS, INCLUDING VACANT LOTS USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR PARKING AND PRESCRIBING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship

Senate Bill No. 746, entitled

AN ACT EXPANDING THE APPLICATION OF THE LOCAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT FUND BY AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10121, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PHILIPPINE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2010

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To The Committees On National Defense And Security; And Local Government

Senate Bill No. 747, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING EVACUATION CENTERS IN EVERY MUNICIPALITY AND CITY, PROVIDING FOR THE NECESSARY FACILITIES, ENSURING THEIR STRUCTURAL CAPACITY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on National Defense and Security; Public Works; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 748, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF QUALIFIED LIFEGUARDS AT ALL PUBLIC SWIMMING POOLS AND BATHING FACILITIES, AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF

Introduced by Senator Gatchalian

To the Committees on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship; and Local Government

Senate Bill No. 749, entitled

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE DRUG REHABILITATION PROGRAMS OF THE GOVERNMENT, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9165 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "COMPREHENSIVE DANGEROUS DRUGS ACT OF 2002," AS AMENDED, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs; Health and Demography; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 750, entitled

AN ACT PROMOTING CORPORATIVE FARMING AND PROVIDING INCENTIVES FOR ITS EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

Introduced by Senator Poe

To the Committees on Agriculture and Food; Agrarian Reform; and Ways and Means

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

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

It was 6:20 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.


ATTY. MYRA MARIE D. VILLARICA
Secretary of the Senate

Approved on August 14, 2019