



**LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE**  
**KEY POINTS OF PLENARY PROCEEDINGS**  
*Second Regular Session, 19<sup>th</sup> Congress*

**Session No. 19**  
**Wednesday, 6 September 2023**

**1. Proposed Senate Resolution No. 770 taking into consideration Proposed Senate Resolution Nos. 774, 775, and 781**

Resolution Expressing Profound Sympathy and Sincere Condolences of the Senate of the Philippines on the Death of Miguel "Mike" Castro Enriquez, Veteran and Multi-Awarded Broadcast Journalist, and Honoring His Contributions to Philippine Journalism and Mass Communications

Sponsors: Sen. Joel Villanueva  
Sen. Sonny Angara  
Sen. Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada  
Sen. Christopher Lawrence T. Go

**Sponsorship Speech of Senator Villanueva**

Senator Villanueva joined the Chamber and the entire nation in mourning the death of a legendary and fearless TV and radio anchor and icon of Philippine media.

Mr. Miguel Castro Enriquez, popularly known as Mike Enriquez and "Mr. Imbestigador ng Bayan," dedicated 54 years of his life to the service of the Filipino audience through his work as a journalist and broadcaster. Over five decades of a distinguished and stellar career is one great and exceptional feat.

The Senator expressed his profound sympathy and condolences to the bereaved family, his wife, Mrs. Lizabeth "Tita Baby" Yumping-Enriquez, his friends, and the entire GMA Network family, and celebrates the life of Mike Enriquez that was well-lived, full of passion, and an inspiration to the legions of young journalists. His journey as a broadcaster is a lesson of credibility, masterful broadcasting, and passion for the truth.

**Cosponsorship Speech of Senator Angara**

Senator Angara stated that if it is true that a nation is ruled by morning radio commentaries and evening news broadcasts, then Mr. Mike Enriquez was one great statesman for our race.

The Senator further mentioned that Mr. Enriquez articulated Filipinos' hopes and with equal passion, their frustrations and fears. The latter's legacy lives on in the many journalists he mentored, and these men and women will carry the torch that will cast a light on the truth.

### **Cosponsorship Speech of Senator Estrada**

Senator Estrada stated that Mr. Enriquez has evolved from a disc jockey at a local radio station to becoming a household name because of his trademark expression, distinct style of delivering news, and hard-hitting commentaries.

The Senator added that Mr. Enriquez inspired a new breed of journalists to continue serving with unassailable integrity, professionalism, and outstanding work; beyond his immense distinctions, recognitions, and contribution to the industry, what is truly important is being true to one's craft.

### **Motion of Senator Villanueva that the cosponsorship speech of Senator Go be inserted into the *Record*.**

### **Cosponsorship Speech of Senator Revilla**

Senator Revilla expressed his sympathy to the family of Mr. Mike Enriquez. He stressed that the latter is remembered for his great talent, courage, and passion for his profession. His career, spanning 54 years, is a testament to this—five decades of greatness.

The Senator reiterated that it is not an exaggeration to say that the Philippine radio and television will not be the same with his passing.

### **Manifestation of Senator Villar (C)**

Senator Villar (C) manifested her support for the resolution honoring Mr. Enriquez.

The Senator informed the Body that Mr. Enriquez' parents were her neighbors before they passed away in 2012. His siblings live in Las Pinas as well. She expressed her hope that the entire family will recover from the sadness of his passing.

### **Cosponsorship Speech of Senator Dela Rosa**

The Senator expressed his condolences to the bereaved family, loved ones, and colleagues of Mr. Mike Enriquez.

The Senator stated that many children grew up with fond memories of their childhood afternoons coming to know Mr. Enriquez' voice and figure. Behind the icon was a man of excellence, integrity, and love for what he did.

He further stressed that Mr. Enriquez' life reminded him of a quote from Calvin Coolidge: "No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the

reward for what he gave.” Mr. Enriquez life’s work and dedication will always be embedded in the lives of every Filipino.

### **Cosponsorship Speech of Senator Poe**

Senator Poe read a quote: “Behind every great man is also a great woman.” She paid tribute to Mr. Enriquez’ wife, Elizabeth, who took care of and supported Mr. Enriquez. That is why he was able to do his work very well, and he was able to conduct himself fairly.

The Senator expressed gratitude to Mr. Enriquez, who, as a journalist, showed the importance of reporting the truth without embellishment.

### **Cosponsorship Speech of Senator Tulfo**

Senator Tulfo expressed his desire to be made cosponsor of the measure. He stated that the passing of Mr. Mike Enriquez is not just a loss but a big loss for the broadcasting industry. His presence would surely be missed by the entire nation as the voice of current affairs.

The Senator stated that Mr. Enriquez was humble and would always make everyone comfortable, even those new in the industry. He would teach and share his knowledge unselfishly.

### **Cosponsorship Speech of Senator Hontiveros**

Senator Hontiveros expressed her sympathy to the entire family of Mr. Enriquez and his GMA 7 family.

Being a former member of the GMA 7 family, the Senator, along with her friends in the institution, felt Mr. Enriquez’ love for his coworkers and the industry.

### **Cosponsorship Speech of Senator Padilla**

Senator Padilla stated that Mr. Enriquez can be compared to the likes of Jose Rizal and Marcelo H. del Pilar, who fearlessly fought to advance the well-being of the Filipino people.

The Senator expressed his condolences to the entire family of Mr. Enriquez.

### **Cosponsorship Speech of Senator Legarda**

Senator Legarda stated that the news of Mr. Enriquez's passing has left everyone with a profound sense of sadness and loss. To her, Mr. Enriquez was not just a prominent figure in journalism and broadcasting but also a well-loved personality who touched many lives. He had integrity, which is a rarity these days. He also exhibited a sense of humility despite his booming voice, presence, and stature.

The Senator expressed her deepest sympathies to his widow and the entire family.

### **Cosponsorship Speech of Senator Cayetano (P)**

Senator Cayetano (P) extended her heartfelt condolences to the family of Mr. Mr. Enriquez. For her, he was a beacon of hope for a new politician because he was very professional and very kind. He impacted the lives of many, not just media personalities but also politicians like them.

### **Manifestation of Senate President Zubiri**

Senate President Zubiri emphasized that Mr. Enriquez was truly iconic. His passing is a significant loss to the nation and the millions of Filipinos who would watch him daily. The nation truly mourns his passing.

### **Motion of Senator Villanueva that all members be made coauthors and cosponsors of P. S. Res. No. 770**

### **Adoption of P. S. Res. No. 770—Resolution No. 88**

## **2. Senate Bill No. 2426 under Committee Report No. 107**

An Act Mandating the Formulation, Funding, Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation of a Comprehensive and Multi-Year “Tatak Pinoy” (Proudly Filipino) Strategy, Establishing a Tatak Pinoy Council, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes

Sponsor: Sen. Sonny Angara

### **Amendments of Senator Angara**

Senator Angara proposed, and the Body approved, the following amendments, among others:

- On Section 2, page 2, line 16, after the word ‘services’, insert the phrase “AND TO ENSURE ADEQUATE AND STEADY SUPPLY OF HIGHLY SKILLED AND ADAPTIVE WORKFORCE AND HUMAN RESOURCE”, and on line 17, after the article ‘the’, insert the word “KNOWLEDGE”.
- On the same page, in lines 21 and 22, delete the phrase “all government agencies and instrumentalities” and replace with THE GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT AND POLICY BOARD (GPPB), and on lines 22 and 23, delete the phrase ‘within their respective spheres, they’ and replace it with “GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND INSTRUMENTALITIES,” subject to style.
- On Section 3, insert new subsections (III) and (IV) which will read as follows:

“(III) SERVICES REFER TO THE DELIVERY OF VALUE OR INTANGIBLE PRODUCTS THROUGH SKILLS, EXPERTISE, LABOR, OR SOME FORM OF KNOWLEDGE-BASED ACTIVITY.

(IV) INTANGIBLE ASSETS WHICH REFER TO PROPERTIES WITHOUT PHYSICAL EXISTENCE SUCH AS GOODWILL, BRAND EQUITY, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTIES (PATENTS, TRADEMARKS AND COPYRIGHTS), COMPUTER SOFTWARE, LICENSING, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTS OF THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY, AMONG OTHERS.

AS MAY BE NECESSARY, THE TP COUNCIL SHALL ISSUE GUIDELINES ON THE CONDITIONS, STANDARDS, AND CRITERIA IN CLASSIFYING PRODUCTS OR SERVICES AS PHILIPPINE PRODUCTS OR SERVICES.”

- On pages 6 and 7, delete the whole of paragraph (g);
- On Section 5, page 9, line 23, delete the phrase “industry policy issues” and replace with “ISSUES RELEVANT TO ECONOMIC COMPLEXITY AND INCREASING THE DIVERSITY, SOPHISTICATION, AND QUALITY OF PHILIPPINE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.”
- On page 10, line 4 insert a new paragraph (L) and renumber the succeeding subsection accordingly. Paragraph (L) shall read:

L) COORDINATE WITH EDUCATION AGENCIES, RELEVANT INTER-AGENCY BODIES INVOLVED IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, AND INDUSTRY, FOR THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM TOWARDS ENSURING ADEQUATE AND STEADY SUPPLY OF HIGHLY SKILLED AND ADAPTIVE HUMAN RESOURCES TO REALIZE THE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC GOALS OF TATAK PINOY

- On Section 7, page 12, line 17, after the word “market”, insert the following provisos:

PROVIDED, THAT, IN APPROVING THE TPS, THE PRESIDENT MAY ONLY EXPAND FROM EXISTING PILLARS IDENTIFIED UNDER THIS ACT; PROVIDED FURTHER, THAT THE PRESIDENT SHALL ENSURE COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION AMONG TP COUNCIL MEMBERS.

THE TPS SHALL BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL BY THE PRESIDENT WITHIN EIGHT (8) MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT AND IS SUBJECT TO MANDATORY REVIEW PURSUANT TO SECTION 10 HEREOF.

- On Section 8, page 15, line 23, delete the phrase “investment priority sector” and replace with LIST OF PRIORITY ACTIVITIES THAT WILL FORM PART OF THE PREVAILING SIPP FOR THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT. THEREAFTER, THE INCLUSION OF TATAK PINOY ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS IN THE SIPP SHALL BE

SUPPORTED BY A FORMAL EVALUATION PROCESS OR REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 300 OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE (NIRC), AS AMENDED. THE TP COUNCIL SHALL PRESCRIBE MEASURABLE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE INCLUSION OF TATAK PINOY PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES IN THE SIPP.

- Section 8, page 16, insert the phrase:

THE GRANT, ADMINISTRATION AND MONITORING OF FISCAL INCENTIVES TO IDENTIFIED TATAK PINOY INVESTMENT PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES UNDER THIS ACT SHALL BE GOVERNED BY TITLE XIII OF THE NIRC, AS AMENDED.

- Section 8, page 16, after line 17, insert the following paragraphs:

THE TP COUNCIL SHALL ENSURE THAT EACH PILLAR TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, SUSTAINABILITY, AND INTERGENERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE POLICIES, PROGRAMS, PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES THAT ARE COVERED IN THE TPS.

THE TP COUNCIL SHALL INCLUDE, WHEREVER IT IS APPROPRIATE IN THE TPS, INTERVENTIONS THAT ENCOURAGE MORE RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION.

- On Section 12, page 18, line 14, delete the entire item (b) and renumber the succeeding items, accordingly.

On the same paragraph, line 16, delete the proviso “Provided, Finally, That domestic preference under this Act shall extend only to Philippine products and services in sectors and economic activities covered by the TPS.”

- On page 19, line 21, insert a new Section 15 and renumber the succeeding Sections accordingly. The new Section 15 shall read as follows:

SECTION 15. GREEN LANES FOR TATAK PINOY PROJECTS. – THE CONCERNED NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, INCLUDING THEIR REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL OFFICES, GOVERNMENT-OWNED OR -CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS (GOCCs), QUASI-JUDICIAL BODIES, OTHER GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUS) INVOLVED IN THE ISSUANCE OF PERMITS, LICENSES, CERTIFICATIONS OR AUTHORIZATIONS, SHALL ESTABLISH A GREEN LANE WITHIN THEIR OFFICES IN CHARGE OF EXPEDITING AND STREAMLINING THE PROCESSES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ISSUANCE OF PERMITS, LICENSES, CERTIFICATIONS OR AUTHORIZATIONS OF TATAK PINOY INVESTMENTS DULY IDENTIFIED IN THE TPS. FOR THIS PURPOSE, THE ABOVE AGENCIES OR OFFICES SHALL DESIGNATE AN ACCOUNT OFFICER FOR THE GREEN LANE.

THE ABOVE AGENCIES SHALL ACT ON THE APPLICATIONS WITHIN THE PRESCRIBED PROCESSING TIME PROVIDED IN THE CONCERNED

AGENCY OR LGU'S CITIZEN'S CHARTER, WHICH SHALL NOT BE LONGER THAN THE PERIODS PRESCRIBED UNDER RA 9485, AS AMENDED.

- On page 20, line 6, insert a new Section 16 and renumber the succeeding sections accordingly.

SEC. 16. DEVELOPMENT OF PHILIPPINE PRODUCTS OR SERVICES. – IN THE AVAILMENT OF INCENTIVES, THE BOI SHALL DETERMINE, THROUGH THE SIPP, THE TATAK PINOY ACTIVITIES, AS IDENTIFIED IN THE TPS, THAT WILL BE REQUIRED TO UTILIZE PHILIPPINE PRODUCTS IN DEVELOPING THEIR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES, IF PRODUCED OR MANUFACTURED DOMESTICALLY IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITY OR OF COMPARABLE QUALITY AND AT REASONABLE PRICES.

- On the same page, page 20, line 12, insert a new Section 17 and renumber the succeeding sections accordingly.

SEC. 17. EFFICIENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VAT REFUND. – NOTWITHSTANDING ANY EXISTING RULES, THE BIR SHALL IMPLEMENT A STREAMLINED REQUIREMENT AND PROCESS FOR FASTER VAT REFUND OF ENTITIES WITH TATAK PINOY-RELATED TRANSACTIONS IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY CASH FLOW CONCERNS OF ANY TATAK PINOY PROGRAMS, PROJECTS, OR ACTIVITIES.

- On page 20, after line 20, insert a new Section 19 which will read as follows:

SEC. 19. AMENDATORY CLAUSE –

(1) TO ALIGN WITH THE POLICY OF THIS ACT TO MANDATE PREFERENCE FOR PHILIPPINE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT, SECTION 43 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9184 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT REFORM ACT, IS HEREBY AMENDED;

(2) TO HARMONIZE DEFINITIONS ON QUALIFIED PHILIPPINE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FOR PURPOSES OF GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT, SECTIONS 2 AND 3 OF COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 138 ARE HEREBY MODIFIED;

(3) ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAWS, ORDERS, AGREEMENTS, RULES, OR REGULATIONS CONTRARY TO AND INCONSISTENT WITH THIS ACT IS HEREBY AMENDED OR MODIFIED ACCORDINGLY.

- On Section 19, page 20 to 21, line 21, delete the paragraph “Sections 2 and 3 of Commonwealth Act No. 138, insofar as it restricts the definition of domestic products to those substantially from articles, materials or supplies of the growth, production or manufacture of the Philippines, are hereby repealed.”

### **3. Senate Bill No. 2243 under Committee Report No. 85**

An Act Strengthening and Revitalizing the Salt Industry in the Philippines, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes

Sponsor: Sen. Cynthia A. Villar

#### **Amendments of Senator Villar (C)**

Senator Villar introduced, and the Body approved, the following individual amendments, among others:

- An omnibus amendment which shall replace all the adjective “marginalized” with the words **SUBSISTENCE AND SMALL** in the phrases “marginalized cooperatives, associations, farmers and fisherfolk.”

On Section 5, page 5, line 14, subject to style, insert an anterior proviso which shall read: *PROVIDED, THAT THE RESPECTIVE AGENCIES MAY DESIGNATE THEIR PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES WHOSE RANK SHALL NOT BE LESS THAN AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY.*

#### **Amendment of Senator Legarda**

- On Section 3, page 2, line 5, Senator Legarda introduced the definition of “artisanal salt,” to read as follows:

*ARTISANAL SALT* REFERS TO UNREFINED SALT DERIVED DIRECTLY FROM A LIVING SEA OR OCEAN USING TRADITIONAL METHODS. IT RETAINS NATURAL TRACES OF MINERALS COMING FROM SEAWATER AND IS PRODUCED BY TRADITIONAL OR COMMUNITY-BASED ENTERPRISES.

#### **Amendment of Senator Villanueva**

Amendment of Senator Villanueva which the Body approved.

- On page 5, between lines 2 and 3, insert a new item, letter I, **SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT.**

#### **Amendments of Senator Villar (C).**

Senator Villar proposed, and the Body approved, the following amendments, among others:

- On Section 5, page 5, line 14, insert that a quorum would be one-third of the members, subject to style.
- On page 13, line 20, after the word “Act”, replace the comma (,) with a period (.), and insert the statement:



THE BFAR SHALL INSTITUTIONALIZE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SALT INDUSTRY PROGRAM (DSIP) AS A REGULAR PROGRAM FUNDED BY THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT (GAA) AND SHALL COVER THE INTERVENTIONS THAT ARE NOT INCLUDED FOR FUNDING BY THE SIDCEF.

- On Section 23, page 16, delete lines 1 to 5 and replace with the following:

SEC. 23. *IMPORTATION AND EXPORTATION OF SALT.* – EVERY PERSON, NATURAL OR JURIDICAL, ENGAGED IN THE IMPORTATION AND/OR EXPORTATION OF SALT SHALL FIRST SECURE CLEARANCE FOR SAID TRANSACTION FROM THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES:

- A) DOH-FDA- FOR IODIZED SALT;
- B) DA-BFAR- FOR NON-IODIZED FOOD GRADE SALT; AND,
- C) DA-BFAR- FOR NON-FOOD GRADE SALT”

### **Amendment of Senator Cayetano (P)**

Amendment of Senator Cayetano (P) which the Body approved.

- On Section 21, page 15, line 18, after the word “information”, insert the phrase PROMOTION OF LOCALLY PRODUCED SALT TO LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS.

### **Amendments of Senator Pimentel**

Amendments of Senator Pimentel which the Body approved.

- On page 16, line 14, after the word “production”, insert the following phrase: comma (,) AS WELL AS OF ARTISANAL SALT comma (,).
- On page 16, line 15, beginning with the word “thereby”, delete all the entries up to line 20, up to the word “salt” period (.)

### **Manifestation of Senator Cayetano (P)**

Senator Cayetano (P) wanted to be clear in the record that the duty of DOH to oversee and to make policies with whatever supplementation needed—iodine or whatever—remains.

### **Manifestation of Senator Hontiveros**

Senator Hontiveros manifested that the World Health Organization made a statement that “All food-grade salt used in household and food processing should be fortified with iodine as a safe and effective strategy for the prevention and control of iodine deficiency disorders.” In other words, WHO recognizes that food-grade salt should be iodized, not only if it is produced by large-scale producers but also if it

originates from small-scale producers. As a result, ensuring the iodization of salt originating from small producers is important to address health inequities.

The Senator further stated that artisanal salt has been promoted as a natural and unrefined product, making it attractive for special applications and packaged as a value-added commodity. As a result, producers are not willing to add iodine to this type of salt as the addition of a chemical is viewed to degrade the natural status of the product.

Moreover, she stressed that the Iodine Global Network and its partners strongly opposed such exemptions to salt iodization programs as they could lead to a decline of iodine in diets. Hence, it is clear that gourmet salts should not be exempted from mandatory salt iodization.

She recognized that the Senate has provided for a more limited and specific definition of artisanal salts in the definition of terms, and that the mandate of the Department of Health, either to sustain or to change its policy on such issues, stands.

### **Motion to reconsider the approval of amendments to Section 23**

#### **Amendments of Senator Villar**

Senator Villar (C) proposed to amend Section 23, which the Body approved, to read as follows:

**SEC. 23. IMPORTATION OF SALT. – NO PERSON SHALL IMPORT WITHOUT FIRST SECURING A PERMIT FROM THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES:**

A. DA-BFAR AND DOH-FDA- FOR FOOD GRADE SALT; AND

B. DA-BFAR FOR NON-FOOD GRADE SALT.

THE DOH-FDA AND DA-BFAR ARE HEREBY MANDATED TO HARMONIZE AND STREAMLINE THEIR PROCESSES.

### **Approval of S. No. 2243 on Second Reading**

#### **4. Senate Bill No. 2200 under Committee Report No. 66**

An Act Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being in Basic Education by Institutionalizing a School-Based Mental Health Program, Establishing Care Centers, Prescribing the Creation of New Plantilla Positions of Mental Health Specialists and Mental Health Associates in the Department of Education, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes

Sponsor: Sen. Win Gatchalian

## **Amendments of Senator Gatchalian**

Senator Gatchalian proposed, and the Body approved, the following amendments, among others:

- On page 2, line 1, of the amended copy as of August 29, 2023, after the word “program”, insert the phrase AND OTHER HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACTIVITIES INCLUDING SPORTS, INCLUDING SPORTS-RELATED PROGRAMS.
- On page 6, lines 5 to 9, delete the lines starting from the word “The” until the word “*Provided*”, then insert the clause: *PROVIDED, THAT THE DEPED, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PHILIPPINE COUNCIL FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, SHALL PROVIDE A GENERAL FRAMEWORK AS DISCUSSED.*
- On page 8, line 1, insert a new paragraph to be read as follows:

IT SHALL LIKEWISE DEVELOP A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR IN-SERVICE TEACHERS TO EARN EIGHTEEN (18) UNITS OF COURSES IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING OR PSYCHOLOGY TO QUALIFY AS MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATES, SHOULD THEY OPT TO APPLY FOR SUCH POSITIONS.

## **Approval of S. No. 2200 on Second Reading**

### **5. Senate Bill No. 2221 under Committee Report No. 69**

An Act Providing for the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers

Sponsor: Sen. Raffy Tulfo

## **Interpellation of Senator Pimentel**

Senator Pimentel stated that the purpose of his interpellation was to make sure that there would be no “unintended consequences” flowing out from the words used in the bill or in the law to make sure that our Filipino seafarers benefit from the Magna Carta.

On how to ensure the applicability of the Magna Carta, Senator Tulfo explained that both international and domestic seafarers will benefit from it. For domestic seafarers, they are subject to Philippine laws. The DOLE and MARINA cover domestic seafarers. For international seafarers, the flagship of the country where the seafarers are employed will be governed by the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) of 2006.

Senator Tulfo further explained that the proposed Magna Carta will implement MLC 2006, which is necessary in order for the Philippines to be compliant. In fact, all the contents of the MLC 2006 were reproduced in the Magna Carta. However, the Committee added a particular chapter applicable only to domestic seafarers.

Senator Pimentel inquired on the top three ideas in MLC 2006, which can be found in the Magna Carta. The Sponsor responded that the bill specified several rights, such as the right to just terms and conditions of work, the right to self-organization and collective bargaining, the right to educational advancement and training at reasonable and affordable cost, and the right to information of seafarer's family or next-of-kin, among others.

On how the foreign shipowner of an oceangoing vessel can be held liable, Senator Tulfo answered that the owner of the ship and the manning agency shall be solidarily liable.

When asked whether there were oppositions to the bill, the Sponsor mentioned that during the technical working group meeting, there were oppositions to having escrow provisions. However, Senator Tulfo assured them that there would never be escrow provisions.

The Sponsor likewise mentioned that the manning agencies raised their concern that the absence of escrow provisions may result in financial loss; hence, the shipowners will no longer hire Filipino seafarers. In order to address this, the Sponsor focused on the root cause of the problem—the ambulance chasers. To eliminate ambulance chasing, it was agreed that the grading system of disability would be introduced in the period of amendments.

On why the fishermen were excluded from coverage, Senator Tulfo reasoned out that fishermen are covered under Convention 188 of the International Labor Organization of 2007, wherein they are recognized as seafarers but with a different designation under the Maritime Labor Law.

Senator Pimentel suggested including the fishermen in the coverage of the Magna Carta. However, Senator Tulfo opined that for now, it is better if they are not included to avoid confusion. Further, he stated that MLC standards are higher, which the fishing industry may not be able to comply with.

Senator Pimentel inquired whether a cadet could be considered a seafarer, to which the Sponsor replied in the affirmative.

As regards ships of traditional built, the Sponsor mentioned that they are not covered under the bill because they are not used for commercial purposes. Seafarers on these vessels will be governed by the Labor Code and will be under the jurisdiction of DOLE and MARINA. However, Filipino seafarers on board cruise ships will be covered under the proposed bill.

As to the concepts and provisions of Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW) that had been adopted in the bill, Senator Tulfo explained that STCW is an agency that ensures that training and certification and safety of the seafarers are followed. Also, curriculum-wise, it is very strict in evaluating and monitoring to ensure compliance.

The Sponsor recounted the experience when the European Union warned the Philippines to do something with the maritime industry, or else the Philippines

would not be accredited by the EU. In 2021, he said, the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) inspected and saw numerous violations. In 2022, the Philippines submitted a position paper stating the steps to comply with international standards. With that, the country was given a few years to comply.

#### **6. House Bill No. 4844 under Committee Report No. 93**

An Act Creating a Barangay in the Municipality of Barobo, Province of Surigao Del Sur, to be Known as Barangay Guinhalinan

Sponsor: Sen. Joseph Victor "JV" G. Ejercito

#### **Sponsorship Speech of Senator Ejercito**

Senator Ejercito stated that the bill seeks the creation of Barangay Guinhalinan in the Municipality of Barobo, Province of Surigao.

Moreover, the Sponsor stressed that the proposed Barangay Guinhalinan qualifies as a tribal barangay. A certification issued by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) confirms that the Manobo Indigenous Peoples are presently inhabiting Barangay Guinhalinan.

Further, he mentioned that Barangay Guinhalinan, comprising Sitios Guinhalinan, Umbon, Candi-isán, and Binu-uyan, was created by virtue of a local ordinance. As such, the barangay is precluded from receiving any share in the National Tax Allotments (NTA), and its financial requirements are borne by the local government unit of Barobo.

Therefore, the passage of the measure will entitle Barangay Guinhalinan to its just share in the local wealth in accordance with the Local Government Code, which will immensely improve the delivery of basic services, especially to the Manobo IP community in the barangay.

#### **7. House Bill No. 5819 under Committee Report No. 117**

An Act Dividing Barangay 176 also Known as Barangay Bagong Silang in the City of Caloocan into Six (6) Separate and Independent Barangays to be Known as Barangay 176-A, Barangay 176-B, Barangay 176-C, Barangay 176-D, Barangay 176-E, and Barangay 176-F

Sponsor: Sen. Joseph Victor "JV" G. Ejercito

#### **Sponsorship Speech of Senator Ejercito**

Senator Ejercito mentioned that the bill seeks for the division of Barangay 176, or Barangay Bagong Silang, in the City of Caloocan into six separate and independent barangays.

The Senator said that Barangay 176, or Barangay Bagong Silang, located in North Caloocan, is the largest barangay both in population and land area in the country. Based on the latest census conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority in 2020, the barangay has a population of 261,729, accounting for 16% of Caloocan City's population.

The primary aim is to empower these communities by providing them with greater resources and a chance for a brighter future.

Through the committee's public hearing and consultation with the concerned agencies, it was affirmed that the proposed six barangays to be created met the criteria for the creation of barangays provided under the Local Government Code.

**Motion of Senator Villanueva that the cosponsorship speech of Senator Go on House Bill Nos. 4844 and 5819 be inserted into the *Record*.**

**The session was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.**