



Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 14th CONGRESS, THIRD REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Monday, August 3, 2009

No. 4

CALL TO ORDER

At 4:00 p.m. Deputy Speaker Simeon A. Datumanong called the session to order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The session is called to order.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). Everybody is requested to rise for the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). Please remain standing for the Invocation to be delivered by the honorable Congressman Paul Daza from Northern Samar.

Everybody remained standing for the Invocation.

INVOCATION

REP. DAZA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Lord, Thou hast giveth, and Thou hast taketh away.

You have taken back to Your bosom our beloved former President Corazon Cojuangco Aquino, our icon of democracy, our inspiration during life's most difficult times. President Cory Aquino is gone but her memory lives on.

As God's gift to the Filipino people, President Cory has lived her whole life to her life's calling and mission—that of restoring democracy and preserving its gains especially during the country's darkest moments.

This she did from the time her husband, Ninoy, was incarcerated. She bravely took care of her family alone and faced Ninoy's tormentors amidst the indifference and perceived fear of even some of their associates and friends—until his brutal death.

President Cory ushered the People Power revolt—a non-violent and peaceful uprising which up to this day continues to inspire people all over the world in fighting oppression and authoritarian governments.

Her presidency was marred by several coups but with single-minded determination, she successfully defended the democratic institution until the peaceful transfer of power to her successor.

Lord, we thank You for giving us President Cory. Even as a private citizen, when the ideals of democracy are

threatened and during her illness, when she faced a certain death, she showed remarkable courage, unwavering faith, and untainted love for us all.

Lord, let her crusade for peace and democracy reverberate throughout the whole world. Let the love that flows from the Sacred Heart of Your son Jesus flow in each and every one of us so that we can share this love to our fellowmen. Let Your guiding hand touch Cory's loved ones so that they, especially her children, will feel and experience the love and appreciation of the Filipino people for everything she has done for them.

Lastly, Lord, we lift up to you the Filipino people. Let the legacy of Cory inspire us all to stand for what is right and moral. Let not the forces of evil prevail upon the Filipino nation so that democracy, unity and harmony will continue to flourish.

Lord, let all these and more be done according to Your will. These we ask in the mighty name of Your son Jesus. Amen.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Floor Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The session is suspended for a few minutes.

It was 4:04 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:16 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we defer with the roll call in the meantime.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Reference of Business.

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

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary General read the following House Bills and Resolutions on First Reading, Committee Reports and Communications, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:

BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6626, entitled:

“AN ACT PENALIZING THE MAINTENANCE OF A DEN OR ANY PLACE FOR CYBER SEX ACTIVITIES OR EXHIBITION OF PRIVATE ACTS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Tieng, Velarde and Coscolluela
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 6627, entitled:

“AN ACT PROHIBITING THE WITHHOLDING OF STUDENTS’ OFFICIAL RECORDS FOR TRANSFER PURPOSES BY REASON OF NON-PAYMENT OF SCHOOL TUITION FEES AND OTHER NECESSARY FEES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Tieng, Velarde and Coscolluela
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6628, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE DRUG PRICE REGULATORY BOARD TO REGULATE THE PRICES OF DRUGS AND MEDICINES IN THE PHILIPPINES AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9502, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE CHEAPER AND QUALITY MEDICINES ACT OF 2008’ AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representatives Biron, Dela Cruz and Marcos
TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY

House Bill No. 6629, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE OFFENSE OF CRIMINAL INVASION OF PERSONAL PRIVACY”

By Representative Santiago (N.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

House Bill No. 6630, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING STOCK MARKET INSTRUCTION IN HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION”

By Representative Santiago (N.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 6631, entitled:

“AN ACT REGULATING THE USE OF POWERED EQUIPMENT IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS”

By Representative Santiago (N.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY

House Bill No. 6632, entitled:

“AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAMS TO RETAIN HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES”

By Representative Santiago (N.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill No. 6638, entitled:

“AN ACT GRANTING REPRESENTATION AND TRAVEL ALLOWANCES TO BARANGAY CHAIRMEN”

By Representative Salimbangon
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1286, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8981, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘PROFESSIONAL REGULATION COMMISSION (PRC) MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2000’ AND RECOMMEND APPROPRIATE REMEDIAL LEGISLATION THERETO”

By Representative Mariano
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1287, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PROCEDURE REGARDING THE COLLECTION OF REAL PROPERTY TAX, THE ISSUANCE OF NOTICE OF TAX DELINQUENCY, AND TAX DELINQUENCY SALES, AMIDST REPORTS OF ABUSE AND COLLUSION BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND UNSCRUPULOUS BIDDERS, TO THE GREAT PREJUDICE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND INNOCENT REAL PROPERTY OWNERS”

By Representative Bichara
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1288, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION’S RECENT PROCUREMENT OF

MEDICAL AND DENTAL SUPPLIES TO SHED LIGHT ON THE PRICING DISCREPANCIES AND POSSIBLE OVERPRICING, PARTICULARLY OF CITRONELLA SHAMPOO AND OTOSCOPES, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE PROPER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT AND TO IMPROVE HEALTH SERVICES IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS”

By Representative Palatino
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1289, entitled:

“HOUSE RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE EVALUATION OF WORK OF THE INTER-AGENCY LEGAL ACTION GROUP (IALAG) IN THE LIGHT OF ITS ABOLITION BY PRES. GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO AS PER RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATION’S RAPPORTEUR MR. PHILIP ALSTON, REVIEW ALL ITS ACTIONS, DECISIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS AND RECOMMEND CORRECTIVE MEASURES WITHIN AFFECTED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES INCLUDING WITHDRAWAL OF ALL LEGAL CASES FILED, INITIATED AND/OR AIDED BY IALAG AGAINST PERSONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS DURING ITS INCUMBENCY”

By Representatives Maglunsod, Mariano, Maza, Ilagan, Ocampo, Casiño, Colmenares and Palatino
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1290, entitled:

“RESOLUTION ORGANIZING THE PHILIPPINES–CANADA PARLIAMENTARIANS’ FRIENDSHIP GROUP”

By Representatives Silverio and Ablan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INTER-PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

House Resolution No. 1291, entitled:

“RESOLUTION ORGANIZING THE PHILIPPINE–TURKISH PARLIAMENTARIANS’ FRIENDSHIP GROUP”

By Representatives Silverio and Ablan
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INTER-PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

House Resolution No. 1292, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON LABOR, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND OVERSEAS WORKERS AFFAIRS TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE PLIGHT OF MIGRANT FILIPINO WORKERS IN SABAH, MALAYSIA AND RECOMMEND MEASURES THEREOF, INCLUDING THE IMMEDIATE SETTING UP OF AN OFFICE THAT WILL BE TASKED TO ATTEND TO THE NEEDS, GRIEVANCES AND WELFARE OF FILIPINO WORKERS, WHETHER DOCUMENTED OR NOT”

By Representatives Ilagan and Maza
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1295, entitled:

“RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON BANKS AND FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY INTO THE PROPRIETY OF THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP) PLAN TO SHIFT TO THE USE OF SYNTHETIC POLYMER TO PRODUCE CURRENCY NOTE WHICH AT PRESENT ARE BASED MAINLY ON DURABLE SPECIAL PAPER MADE OUT OF ABACA FIBER TISSUE AND COTTON”

By Representative Santiago (J.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Joint Resolution No. 39, entitled:

“JOINT RESOLUTION CREATING A JOINT LEGISLATIVE-EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ON DEBT-FOR-MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs) SWAP TO PURSUE THE INITIATIVE AS A DEBT REDUCTION STRATEGY AND A RESOURCE GENERATION SCHEME FOR SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT”

By Representative Lagman
TO THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

ADDITIONAL COAUTHORS

Rep. Pedro P. Romualdo for House Bill No. 682;
Rep. Salvador B. Britanico for House Bill No. 3785;
Rep. Rolando “Klarex” A. Uy for House Bill No. 5880;
Rep. Mark Llandro L. Mendoza for House Bill No. 6398;
Rep. Francisco Emmanuel R. Ortega III for House Bill No. 6534;
Reps. Joseph Emilio A. Abaya, Liwayway Vinzons-Chato and Maria Evita “Ivy” R. Arago for House Joint Resolution No. 42.

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated July 17, 2009 of Joaquin C. Lagonera, Senior Deputy Executive Secretary and Acting Head, Presidential Legislative Liaison Office, Office of the President, transmitting herewith two (2) original copies of Republic Act No. 9654 which was approved and signed into law on July 17, 2009 by Her Excellency, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING JULY 18TH A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF SOUTH COTABATO IN COMMEMORATION OF ITS FOUNDATION ANNIVERSARY AND THE CULMINATION OF THE T’NALAK FESTIVAL”

TO THE ARCHIVES

Letter dated July 23, 2009 of Joaquin C. Lagonera, Senior Deputy Executive Secretary and Acting Head, Presidential Legislative Liaison Office, Office of the President, transmitting herewith two (2) original copies of the following Republic Acts which were approved and

signed into law on July 17, 2009 by Her Excellency, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, to wit:

Republic Act No. 9655, entitled:

“AN ACT CHANGING THE NAME OF CONCEPCION HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY MALANDAY, CITY OF MARIKINA, TO MALANDAY NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL”

Republic Act No. 9656, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY TABOC, MUNICIPALITY OF ANGAT, PROVINCE OF BULACAN TO BE KNOWN AS ANGAT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9657, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY STO. NIÑO, CITY OF MARIKINA TO BE KNOWN AS STO. NIÑO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9658, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY MALARUHATAN, MUNICIPALITY OF LIAN, PROVINCE OF BATANGAS TO BE KNOWN AS LIAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9659, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE VALENZUELA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – PUNTURIN ANNEX IN BARANGAY PUNTURIN, CITY OF VALENZUELA, METRO MANILA FROM THE VALENZUELA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS VICENTE P. TRINIDAD NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9660, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE VALENZUELA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – BIGNAY ANNEX IN BARANGAY BIGNAY, CITY OF VALENZUELA FROM THE VALENZUELA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS BIGNAY NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9661, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY MINUYAN PROPER, CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE, PROVINCE OF BULACAN TO BE KNOWN AS MINUYAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9662, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL IN THE CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE, PROVINCE OF BULACAN TO BE KNOWN AS CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE NATIONAL SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9663, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE ANTIPOLLO

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – CUPANG ANNEX IN BARANGAY CUPANG, CITY OF ANTIPOLLO FROM THE ANTIPOLLO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS CUPANG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9664, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE PANTABANGAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – GANDUZ ANNEX IN BARANGAY GANDUZ, MUNICIPALITY OF PANTABANGAN, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA FROM THE PANTABANGAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS GANDUZ NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9665, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY BAESA, CITY OF QUEZON TO BE KNOWN AS BAESA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9666, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE CONSTANCIO PADILLA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – STO. NIÑO 3RD ANNEX IN BARANGAY STO. NIÑO 3RD, CITY OF SAN JOSE, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA FROM THE CONSTANCIO PADILLA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS STO. NIÑO 3RD NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9667, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE CARRANGLAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – BURGOS ANNEX IN BARANGAY BURGOS, MUNICIPALITY OF CARRANGLAN, PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA FROM THE CARRANGLAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS BURGOS NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9668, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL AGRO-INDUSTRIAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY KAPATALAN, MUNICIPALITY OF SINILLOAN, PROVINCE OF LAGUNA TO BE KNOWN AS GOVERNOR FELICISIMO T. SAN LUIS NATIONAL AGRO-INDUSTRIAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9669, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE VALENZUELA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – ARKONG BATO ANNEX IN BARANGAY ARKONG BATO, CITY OF VALENZUELA, METRO MANILA FROM THE VALENZUELA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO

BE KNOWN AS ARKONG BATO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9670, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY APOLONIO SAMSON, QUEZON CITY TO BE KNOWN AS APOLONIO SAMSON NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9671, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE BOTOLAN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BOTOLAN, PROVINCE OF ZAMBALES INTO A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS BOTOLAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9672, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL IN THE CITY OF CALOOCAN TO BE KNOWN AS CALOOCAN NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9673, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY SAN ROQUE, CITY OF MARIKINA TO BE KNOWN AS SAN ROQUE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9674, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY BARANGKA, CITY OF MARIKINA TO BE KNOWN AS BARANGKA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9675, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE PANAN HIGH SCHOOL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BOTOLAN, PROVINCE OF ZAMBALES INTO A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS PANAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9676, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE CALOOCAN CITY SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL – CHS ANNEX IN BARANGAY SIXTY-TWO (62), CITY OF CALOOCAN FROM THE CALOOCAN HIGH SCHOOL (CHS), CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS CALOOCAN CITY SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

Republic Act No. 9677, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE NEW TAUGTOG HIGH SCHOOL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BOTOLAN, PROVINCE OF ZAMBALES INTO A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS NEW TAUGTOG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”
and

Republic Act No. 9678, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH

SCHOOL IN BARANGAY KALUMPANG, CITY OF MARIKINA TO BE KNOWN AS KALUMPANG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

TO THE ARCHIVES

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report by the Committee on Justice and the Committee on Human Rights (Committee Report No. 2220), re H.B. No. 6633, entitled:

“AN ACT DEFINING AND PENALIZING CRIMES AGAINST INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW, GENOCIDE AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, OPERATIONALIZING UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION, DESIGNATING SPECIAL COURTS, AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bills No. 1748, 2591 and 3002

Sponsors: Representatives Defensor (M.), Tañada, Golez, Datumanong and Rodriguez

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 2221), re H.B. No. 3839, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY LIONG, MUNICIPALITY OF DUMANJUG, PROVINCE OF CEBU, TO BE KNOWN AS THE DUMANJUG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval with amendments

Sponsors: Representatives De Guzman, Cua (J.) and Garcia (P.)

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 2222), re H.B. No. 3981, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY CAMANSI, TORIL DISTRICT, DAVAO CITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE CAMANSI NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval with amendments

Sponsors: Representatives De Guzman, Cua (J.) and Ungab

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 2223), re H.B. No. 6634, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE LURUGAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – LILINGAYON ANNEX IN BARANGAY LILINGAYON, CITY OF VALENCIA, PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON FROM THE LURUGAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS LILINGAYON NATIONAL

HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4729

Sponsors: Representatives De Guzman, Cua (J.) and Guingona

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 2224), re H.B. No. 6635, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE VALENCIA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL–TONGAN-TONGAN ANNEX IN BARANGAY TONGAN-TONGAN, CITY OF VALENCIA, PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON FROM THE VALENCIA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS TONGAN-TONGAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4730

Sponsors: Representatives De Guzman, Cua (J.) and Guingona

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 2225), re H.B. No. 6636, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE VALENCIA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL–GUINUYORAN ANNEX IN BARANGAY GUINUYORAN, CITY OF VALENCIA, PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON FROM THE VALENCIA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS GUINUYORAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4731

Sponsors: Representatives De Guzman, Cua (J.) and Guingona

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 2226), re H.B. No. 6637, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE SIAYAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL–DIONGAN ANNEX IN BARANGAY DIONGAN, MUNICIPALITY OF SIAYAN, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE FROM THE SIAYAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, TO BE KNOWN AS DIONGAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4732

Sponsors: Representatives De Guzman, Cua (J.) and Labadlabad

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 2227), re H.B. No. 6639, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE GENERAL T. DE LEON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL–TAÑADA ANNEX IN BARANGAY GENERAL T. DE LEON, CITY OF VALENZUELA FROM THE GENERAL T. DE LEON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS SANTIAGO SAN ANDRES DE GUZMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 4906

Sponsors: Representatives De Guzman, Cua (J.) and Gunigundo

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 2228), re H.B. No. 6640, entitled:

“AN ACT SEPARATING THE MANOLO FORTICH NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL–DALIRIG ANNEX IN BARANGAY DALIRIG, MUNICIPALITY OF MANOLO FORTICH, PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON FROM THE MANOLO FORTICH NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS DALIRIG NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 5361

Sponsors: Representatives De Guzman, Cua (J.) and Pancrudo

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 2229), re H.B. No. 5532, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE ALAWIHAO HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY ALAWIHAO, MUNICIPALITY OF DAET, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES NORTE, TO BE KNOWN AS ALAWIHAO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

recommending its approval with amendments

Sponsors: Representatives De Guzman, Cua (J.) and Vinzons-Chato

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report No. 2230), re H.B. No. 5534, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE EUGENIA MORANO–QUINTELA MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY BANOCBOC, MUNICIPALITY OF VINZONS, PROVINCE OF CAMARINES NORTE INTO A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO

BE KNOWN AS THE EUGENIA MORANO–
QUINTELA MEMORIAL NATIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL”

recommending its approval with amendments

Sponsors: Representatives De Guzman, Cua (J.) and
Vinzons-Chato

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture
and the Committee on Appropriations (Committee Report
No. 2231), re H.B. No. 5535, entitled:

“AN ACT CONVERTING THE GONZALES–
ASCUTIA HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY STA.
CRUZ, MUNICIPALITY OF TALISAY,
PROVINCE OF CAMARINES NORTE INTO A
NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS
THE GONZALES–ASCUTIA NATIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR”

recommending its approval with amendments

Sponsors: Representatives De Guzman, Cua (J.) and
Vinzons-Chato

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Report by the Committee on Natural Resources (Committee
Report No. 2238), re H.B. No. 6641,
entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING AS AGRICULTURAL LAND
OPEN TO DISPOSITION THE LAND
EMBRACED IN PROCLAMATION NO. 602,
DATED APRIL 12, 2004, ENTITLED,
‘DECLARING AS ECO-TOURISM PARK AND
CAMPSITE PURPOSES, A CERTAIN PARCEL
OF LAND OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN
SITUATED IN BARANGAYS LUBIGAN AND
MORIONES, SAN JOSE, TARLAC”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill
No. 4263

Sponsors: Representatives Arroyo (I.), Ungab, Pichay,
Ong and Yap

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve
Journal No. 2, the Journal of the proceedings in the House of
Representatives last July 28, 2009.

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

REP. AGBAYANI. Likewise, Mr. Speaker, I move that
we approve Journal No. 3, the Journal of the proceedings
last July 29, 2009.

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the
session for a few minutes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The
session is suspended for a few minutes.

It was 4:21 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:40 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed
to the Additional Reference of Business.

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

The Secretary General will please read the Additional
Reference of Business.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

*The Secretary General read the following House
Resolutions, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding
references:*

House Resolution No. 1299, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXTOLLING HER EXCELLENCY,
CORAZON COJUANGCO AQUINO, THE ELEVENTH
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE
PHILIPPINES AND GLOBAL ICON OF DEMOCRACY
FOR STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY AND THE
RULE OF LAW IN THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representatives Nograles, Defensor (A.), Zamora (R.)
and Villanueva

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1300, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND
CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF HER
EXCELLENCY, CORAZON COJUANGCO
AQUINO, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representatives Nograles, Defensor (A.), Zamora (R.)
and all Members of the House of Representatives

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1301, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION GRANTING THE LATE CORAZON
C. AQUINO, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, THE HIGHEST
COMMENDATION AND EXPRESSING ITS
SINCEREST SYMPATHIES TO THE FAMILY OF
THE LATE PRESIDENT CORAZON C. AQUINO”

By Representative Mitra
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1302, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING DEEP SORROW AND PROFOUND SYMPATHY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEMISE OF PRESIDENT CORAZON CONJUANGCO AQUINO, THE 11TH PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Sy-Alvarado
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1303, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE DEEPEST CONDOLENCES AND SINCERE SYMPATHY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF THE LATE PRESIDENT CORAZON COJUANGCO AQUINO”

By Representative Mendoza (V.)
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1304, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND GRIEF AND SORROW OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE PASSING OF FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON CONJUANGCO AQUINO AND A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF A GREAT LEADER OF THIS COUNTRY”

By Representatives Hontiveros and Bello
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1306, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION OF PRESIDENT CORAZON C. AQUINO BY DECLARING HER AS A NATIONAL HERO AND FURTHER DECLARING EVERY AUGUST 1ST AS CORY AQUINO DAY, A NON-WORKING HOLIDAY”

By Representative Vinzons-Chato
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Joint Resolution No. 40, entitled:

“JOINT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE PASSING OF FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON C. AQUINO, CONDOLING WITH THE AQUINO FAMILY, VOWING TO UPHOLD AND PROTECT DEMOCRACY FOR WHICH PRESIDENT AQUINO LIVED AND FOUGHT FOR AND DECLARING FOR THIS PURPOSE, EVERY 25TH DAY OF JANUARY AS A NATIONAL CELEBRATION FOR THE ‘CORY AQUINO DAY’ ”

By Representatives Tañada and Del Rosario
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1307, entitled:

“RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND

CONDOLENCE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEATH OF FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON C. AQUINO”

By Representative Del Mar
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Joint Resolution No. 41, entitled:

“A JOINT RESOLUTION EXTOLLING FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON C. AQUINO, HER LEADERSHIP, AND HER CONTRIBUTIONS IN RESTORING AND STRENGTHENING PHILIPPINE DEMOCRACY, AND URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES TO PROCLAIM CORAZON C. AQUINO AS A HERO OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES”

By Representative Plaza
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Joint Resolution No. 42, entitled:

“A JOINT RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION OF PRESIDENT CORAZON C. AQUINO BY DECLARING HER AS A NATIONAL HERO”

By Representative Vinzons-Chato
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Floor Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.RES. NO. 1299
PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up House Resolution No. 1299.

May I ask the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the measure have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the title thereof without prejudice to inserting its text in the Congressional Record.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 1299, entitled: RESOLUTION EXTOLLING HER EXCELLENCY, CORAZON COJUANGCO AQUINO, THE ELEVENTH PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES AND GLOBAL ICON OF DEMOCRACY FOR STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW IN THE PHILIPPINES.

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The session is suspended for a few minutes.

It was 4:46 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:47 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the distinguished Majority Leader, the Hon. Arthur Defensor, to sponsor House Resolution No. 1299.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Majority Leader, the honorable Gentleman from Iloilo, is recognized to sponsor the resolution.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. DEFENSOR (A.)

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, death is not only an end, it is also a beginning. For all of us, it is an end to mortality; for President Corazon Aquino, it is the beginning of her immortality. And we all know the reasons why.

I am not one of those who claim closeness to President Cory. But I believe I can truly claim that I am one of those who worked hard for her in her fight for the restoration of our democracy. I was one of those who firmly believed that it was only she who can topple the Marcos presidency. And I campaigned hard because she was the only one who can unify our people during those dark days. The EDSA Revolution could not have succeeded without President Aquino. She did not invent People Power but she caused it, and the whole world followed. The EDSA Revolution, the peaceful People Power Revolution, propelled her to greatness. She is the symbol of the triumphant struggle for the restoration of democracy. She proved to the world that the people who thirst for freedom and democracy are irresistible. That the people's will and resolve shall prevail over force of arms. Before the EDSA Revolution, the term "peaceful revolution" was a contradiction in terms. We did not imagine it would happen. But it did happen. And I say it again: President Aquino was the light, strength and inspiration of the revolution. Other nations replicated it and they will continue to replicate it.

When I worked for the government under President Aquino after the EDSA Revolution, I felt I was not only working for the government and the President; I felt that my work was fulfilling and rewarding because I believe I was part of those who helped ensure the preservation of the democracy that President Aquino restored.

President Aquino did not seek power; in fact, she was reluctant to lead her people but she knew that she could not and should not turn her back on her people. Only she can inspire our people and arm them with courage and will to pursue the hopes and dreams of her husband Ninoy.

Sometimes, we wonder why people who did not seek power get bestowed with it. President Aquino did not dream of wielding power and basking in fame but she knew that it was only she, by accepting the challenge to lead, who can liberate our people and she did not fail. It was her courage and reason that ensured the triumph of the struggle of our people.

After the EDSA Revolution, we immediately realized why President Aquino was bestowed with power when she did not seek it. We knew it was the will of the people and the Divine Providence. The EDSA Revolution propelled her to greatness but her other qualities as a person and as a leader made her greater.

During her incumbency, she displayed obvious simplicity in her ways. We discerned that she did not relish the trappings of the presidency. The exercise of presidential power and privilege was devoid of usual blandishment and flourishes and she had no flare for rhetorics and political drama. Instead, there was nobility and simplicity.

President Aquino has a secure place in the temple of the world's great leaders and she will forever be there. I do not believe that the good that men do are interred with their bones. Her noble deeds will never die. The memory of her courage and heroism will remain forever treasured in the deep recesses of the hearts of a grateful people.

We can never say goodbye to President Cory and we shall never say goodbye, for her love for her people is the eternal flame that shall burn for all freedom-loving Filipinos. She is the rising sun of the day and the shining star of the night. In the words of a great poet, "Your nation's heart your grave will be, your monument a nation free."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the distinguished Minority Leader, the Hon. Ronaldo Zamora, to likewise sponsor the resolution.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Minority Leader, the Gentleman from San Juan, is recognized to also sponsor the resolution.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. ZAMORA (R.)

REP. ZAMORA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is never easy to say the right things in a time of grief. Thoughts dry up; feelings struggle; words fail. Mr. Speaker, even a resolution such as ours tonight can only be a pale shadow of what we feel in our hearts at the passing of such a one as President Aquino, such a one who reminds us that in a time of pygmies, this country can still offer and has, in fact, produced giants who exceed us all in bravery, in audacity, in thoughtfulness and in grace.

The members of the parliamentary minority have stood with her in her most recent causes, and they will not forget that when they fought to bring out the truth in recent years, this icon fought as they fought, all of us trying to wrest back this country to that time when right prevailed and wrong remained vanquished, when public accountability meant more than just words in a forgotten Constitution, when we breathed the air of truth and responsibility.

So, Mr. Speaker, let us not forget in our grief that much remains, for us to take up as our continuing duty, and her death, let us remember it as a part of her personal journey, and a small price to pay for what she stood for and fought for and now, has died for, for the future of our benighted, but always beloved, country. And let us take even meager comfort in the words of the poet:

“Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.”

“For what is it to die, but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the air and into the sun? And what is to cease breathing, but to free the breath from its restless tides, that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered? Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing. And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb. And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.”

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Joel Villanueva from Party-List CIBAC as Representative of the party-list to also sponsor House Resolution No. 1299.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Gentleman from Party-List CIBAC is recognized to likewise sponsor the resolution.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. VILLANUEVA

REP. VILLANUEVA. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, distinguished Majority Leader.

Ninoy and Cory are finally together again, they must be very happy.

For the rest of our country's history, yellow will always be synonymous with them.

This day alone, the rest of the country, especially the seedbed of historic national transformations—Ortigas, EDSA, Ayala-Makati and Manila Cathedral—bloomed with everything yellow to remember and celebrate the life of one proud Filipino, President Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino.

Nakakakilabot po at nakakatindig balahibo po na tingnan ang pagdagsa ng napakarami nating mga kababayan para magbigay ng pasasalamat at pamamaalam sa ating minamahal na Pangulong Cory.

The Holy Bible in the Book of Proverbs says: “A good name is more desirable than great riches.”

The sea of people that saw her off from La Salle Greenhills to Manila Cathedral today proved, Mr. Speaker,

that a good name is really to be chosen over great riches, power or fame. Her pure intentions as President made it so worth to serve this country and our people. She lived and died with a name worthy of respect.

Mr. Speaker, I paid my last respects to the woman in yellow last night.

I consider it one of my most memorable birthdays.

Kahapon po, Mr. Speaker, nakipila po ako, kasama ng aking maybahay, mga kapatid, at maging si Baby Doreen na aking pamangkin, doon po sa La Salle, Greenhills para magbigay pugay sa ating minamahal na Pangulong Cory. Nakipila po kami, nakihintay at lumapit sa labi ni Tita Cory.

Sa harap ng namayapang Pangulo, dalawang bagay po ang nasabi ko: “Salamat po” at “Hindi ka po nag-iisa.”

Hindi nga po ba, she is a most loved President!

She was an inspiration to every Filipino and Filipina, the pride of the Philippines, the mother of Philippine democracy, an icon of democracy in Asia.

And we look back now, remembering how she came to our individual lives simply as that—as our Tita Cory.

Mr. Speaker, I was in my first grade when Ninoy was shot. I remember it well when the funeral procession of our national martyr passed through our elementary school in Valenzuela. Umaga pa lang po, Mr. Speaker, ay nagsuot na kami ng dilaw at hinintay na dumaan ang labi ni Senator Ninoy. Tandang-tanda ko po noon, nag-practice pa kami ng mga Laban songs, o cheering ng “Laban, Ninoy, Cory.” At sa pag-aakalang makikita ko si Tita Cory noon, e hindi ko po siya nakita.

I did not see Tita Cory during that funeral procession but for some reason, I felt a bond between me and her. I know many Filipinos felt that bond as well. It was the bond of righteousness and love for our beloved country. Tita Cory became the focal point that harnessed the Filipino people's swelled-up emotions and passion for freedom, democracy and love of country. Sa kanya pong pagkatao, dulot na rin ng kanyang mabuting puso, nag-umpisa at nabuo ang pagbabalik ng pag-asa para sa tunay na pagbabago.

Even as a child, I knew then—or perhaps, more appropriately, felt then—the meaning of connection and of the tie that binds.

Mr. Speaker, it would be years, around 22 years to be exact, when my next significant encounter with Tita Cory would come.

Sa 2005 po, it was the first impeachment complaint against the President. I was to deliver my sponsorship speech and I remember, Mr. Speaker, choosing this very particular podium for one reason—it was the closest to where Tita Cory sat. Dito po iyon, Mr. Speaker.

At that point of political uncertainty, the presence of Tita Cory was calming and reassuring. Her presence assured me that I was on the side of truth, justice and righteousness. Muling ipinaramdam po sa akin ni Tita Cory na tunay ngang hindi ako nag-iisa noon.

The third most significant encounter I had with Tita Cory was during an awarding ceremony for what civil society groups have dubbed as “Bayani ng Katotohanan.” It was held at the De La Salle Greenhills campus, Tita Cory's home for the last three days. Tandang-tanda ko po na kasama ko pa sina Congressman Angara, Congressman Noel, Congressman Chipeco at Congressman Hataman, at sabay-sabay po kaming lumapit at kumamay sa kanya at tuwang-tuwa. In fact, Mr.

Speaker, tandang-tanda ko pa iyong word naming lahat—"starstruck" kami sa kanya.

Bilang isa po sa mga nagbahagi noon ng maikling mensahe para sa mga dumalo, pagkatapos po ng aking talumpati, labis po akong nabigla nang nilapitan po ako ni Tita Cory. It was even more surprising, Mr. Speaker, when she said "great speech."

For a young legislator such as myself, the praise from the icon of inspiration and democracy in the Philippines was truly exhilarating as well as humbling. She touched my life by her very presence. And I guess that is the relationship of every Filipino with the former President. Every Filipino related with Tita Cory. Filipinos far and away connected with her as if personally and intimately, that she easily became part of us.

She was our voice to the world, she brought all of us along with her to her every trip abroad. Every time she spoke to international audiences, she brought our story to all parts of the globe, and she made us proud to be Filipino.

By her honest and simple ways, we trusted her. We were assured by her sincere smile. We awaited her opinion and thoughts on things. We hang on to her every word, and we believed.

She may not have built many bridges or roads, but she will surely be remembered more than a lifetime.

Now that she has physically left us, we know we will long for that Cory, the Tita Cory we selfishly owned, the President Cory who became a leader, albeit reluctantly, when the country needed the most, someone who can inspire and prod us to depend on ourselves once again as a nation and as a people.

President Cory led us to dream again and made us believe that the flicker of light at the end of a tunnel was a promise for the future and was a beacon to us, that we can be what we want to be if only we can trust in ourselves and trust in our God.

The people will miss her reassuring presence in our midst, especially during these trying times in our society. It feels that in her leaving, Mr. Speaker, a light has been switched off, and I can understand that some of us feel like we are groping in uncertainty, hoping to turn that switch on.

But from the time democracy was restored to our nation, we have grown by leaps and bounds, thanks to the inspiration of leaders like our dear President Cory Aquino. Because no matter what, it will no longer be taken away from us—the freedom of spirit she helped restore.

Like the sunshiny yellow ribbons and flowers that have now sprung everywhere, Tita Cory's legacy will brighten our paths towards a more meaningful walk with democracy.

Paalam po, Tita Cory. Dala mo po ang pagmamamahaling sambayanang yumabong sa iyong pangangalaga, kalinga at liwanag. Kailanman, hindi kita malilimutan. Kailanman, hindi ka namin malilimutan. Kailanman ay hinding-hindi ka mag-iisa.

Salamant po, Mr. Speaker.

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

ADOPTION OF H.RES. NO. 1299

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, that ends the sponsorship.

I move, Mr. Speaker that we adopt House Resolution No. 1299 in consolidation with House Resolution No. 1301. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

House Resolution No. 1299 is adopted.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). In view of the passing away of President Cory Aquino, the leadership has decided that in today's session, we shall devote the time of the House to paying tribute to President Cory Aquino. We welcome and recognize those who would wish...

REP. DEL MAR. Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). ...to pay tribute to President Cory Aquino. And...

REP. DEL MAR. Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). ...the Gentleman who shall be first recognized—everybody will be welcome—....

REP. DEL MAR. Mr. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). ...is Congressman Edcel Lagman from Albay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). Before recognizing...

REP. DEL MAR. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). ...the Gentleman from Albay, the Chair would like to find out the pleasure...

REP. DEL MAR. Yes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). ...of the Deputy Speaker from Cebu City.

REP. DEL MAR. Before we go to another matter, Mr. Speaker, and in connection with the resolution just approved, may I ask for the reconsideration of the same only for the purpose of moving that all Members of this House be made coauthors of the resolution.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker.

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

RECONSIDERATION OF THE ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 1299

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). My apologies to the distinguished Deputy Speaker. I was just consulting a couple of seconds ago, and I think it is but proper that we include all the Members of the House as cosponsors of House Resolution

No. 1299. I, therefore, ask that we reconsider the adoption of House Resolution No. 1299. I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). Is there any objection to the motion to reconsider the approval of House Resolution No. 1299? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Majority Leader may now proceed to have all the Members of the House made coauthors of House Resolution No. 1299.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). I move, Mr. Speaker, that all the Members of the House of Representatives of the Fourteenth Congress be made coauthors of House Resolution No. 1299 in consolidation with House Resolution No. 1301.

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

All the Members of the House of Representatives of the Fourteenth Congress are made sponsors or authors of House Resolution No. 1299.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker.

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

ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 1299

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 1299 in consolidation with House Resolution No. 1301.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). On House Resolution No. 1299 being consolidated with House Resolution No. 1301—is there any objection to the motion? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The distinguished Gentleman from Albay is now recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, President Corazon Aquino is truly the icon of Philippine democracy because she was responsible, to a great measure, for the restoration of democratic institutions in our country.

But democracy remains a shibboleth if it fails to enhance the lives of the masses—the very repository of sovereign will and power.

President Aquino made the revival of democracy meaningful and real by making the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program or the CARP the centerpiece of her administration as a social justice agenda.

On 22 July 1987, during her revolutionary government, she issued Proclamation No. 131 instituting a Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. This followed her earlier issuance of Executive Order No. 229 on 17 July 1987, providing the mechanisms for the implementation of the CARP.

In her first State of the Nation Address on 27 July 1987, she urged the Eighth Congress of the Republic to enact a Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law as a “congressional

complement” of the CARP. On 10 June 1988, she signed the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, the CARP was not perfect—both in the basic law and in its implementation. But by and large, it is a salutary program and has beneficent results, foremost of which are the increase in productivity in the countryside and alleviation of rural poverty.

President Aquino was aware that social justice as an agrarian reform objective involves the transformation of the small farmer from a mere tiller of a piece of land to an owner of it, his emancipation from poverty, and the enhancement and nourishment of whatever is left of his mangled self-esteem. He slowly realizes his strength and mobilizes it in his battle for economic self-sufficiency.

The chief contribution of agrarian reform to agricultural development is the motivation it gives to the small farmer to maximize his output from the piece of land he finally owns. He is induced to make optimum use of his available resources. He becomes an entrepreneur.

The multiplier effect of agricultural development through agrarian reform helps radiate economic activity from the farm to other sectors of our economy. The initial impulse of an increase in the incomes of agrarian reform beneficiaries gets communicated throughout the economy.

Emancipation from poverty, entrepreneurship, economic self-sufficiency, empowerment, enhancement and nourishment of self-esteem—these are the blessings that 22 years ago President Aquino projected the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program to give to agrarian reform beneficiaries. To a respectable degree, these have happened.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, President Aquino must have been pleased to know that the House of Representatives ratified on 29 July 2009 the Bicameral Conference Committee Report on the extension of the Land Acquisition and Distribution (LAD) component of the CARP with principal reforms.

The Senate ratified the same a few minutes ago. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is expected to sign the extension measure on Friday.

We are not orphaned by the passing away of President Corazon Aquino.

We have her highest democratic ideals and enduring legacy like the CARP, among others, to cherish and pursue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues.

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

REP. VELARDE. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Satur Ocampo of the Bayan Muna Party-list.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Gentleman from Bayan Muna, the Hon. Satur Ocampo, is recognized.

REP. OCAMPO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Our progressive party-list block in this House in the Fourteenth Congress consisting of the eight Representatives of the Party-list Bayan Muna, Gabriela Women's Party, Anakpawis and Kabataan Party joins the Filipino people in

paying tribute to and saying goodbye to former President Cory Aquino.

We extend our sincerest solidarity with her children and family in their sense of loss but via also a sense of relief that finally, Ms. Cory Aquino has been freed from intense physical pain and the various burdens she had voluntarily taken up in her last days of life.

Specifically, we acknowledge the undeniable key role of Cory Aquino in mobilizing millions of people in the First People Power Revolution of 1987 that caused the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship; and the transition towards a liberal democratic government by the adoption of the 1987 Constitution that has very strong provisions in the Bill of Rights and safeguards on the exercise of the power of the President to declare martial law, as well as nationalist provisions in protecting our patrimony and manning foreign military bases, troops and facilities in the country.

We also acknowledge her initiative in starting peace negotiations with the left's revolutionary forces, and on addressing the root causes of the ARMM conflict despite the fact that the initial peace talks in 1987 was truncated and sabotaged by strong forces of reaction within our government.

We commend Mrs. Aquino's continued support, participation, even leadership, in opposing the series of attempts to change the 1987 Constitution under the different Presidents to serve the selfish interests of those in power. We commend her categorical call for President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to step down in the wake of the Garci tape scandal in 2005; and her final call from her sickbed to the people gathered last June in Ayala Avenue opposing ConAss and Charter change.

Our group has had differences with Mrs. Aquino. But we acknowledge the fact that, in contrast to another President, she never resorted to personally attacking her critics or political adversaries or in initiating revengeful effort against them.

We wish the family of Mrs. Aquino all the accolades accorded to their mother and wish the same for Mrs. Aquino on her travel to the beyond and to history.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. VELARDE. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the Hon. Edelmiro Amante from the Second District of Agusan del Norte.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Gentleman from the Second District of Agusan del Norte is recognized.

REP. AMANTE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker and my colleagues: Cory's life also completed, more or less, the wholeness of my life.

I remember very sadly that when I was an Assemblyman in this august hall, Cory Aquino abolished the Batasang Pambansa. And what was painful was, at the time it was abolished, I was not able to collect yet my salary. So, at that time, I had only P30. And what worsened the situation was, my son was sick and in the hospital, in St. Lukes, and I had to mortgage my watch in order that I could pay. I developed so

much hatred. Why did she have to become the President of the Philippines through People Power, when in Agusan, nobody walked in the streets to protest the presidency of President Marcos?

But now I realized, Mr. Speaker, that life, if it is always crying, would be killing and boring; equally, when life is all smiles, it will also be boring. Because when Cory became the President, I was reelected as Congressman in the first election held under her leadership. And believe you me—this is, maybe, recalling so much—I became the Chairman of the Committee on Public Works and Highways and she invited me to Malacañang. And there I would never forget, in presenting the case of Mindanao, including my own, how she gifted me with an 18-kilometer road that was visited by Magellan in the year 1521. That road still stands today, reaching my place. And believe you me, everytime I walk that road, I walk again with the experience of being intimate with President Cory Aquino.

So I wrote a poem, but this was about a person going away. I said, if I were Ninoy, Ninoy would have written a poem also for Cory. And today, because of the similarities of my situation and hers—my wife having gone away—I wrote that poem and maybe, again, in our hearts when we recite that poem, we would say, "weep not my dear when I am gone but instead, rejoice for then you will know where I will wait for you in that most beautiful shore where God awaits us all."

And I know, God, together with Cory, awaits us all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, the next to give a tribute to the former President is the Hon. Rufus Rodriguez from the Second District of Cagayan de Oro.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Gentleman from the Second District of Cagayan de Oro City is recognized.

REP. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I wish to pay tribute to the late President Corazon Aquino.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the House of Representatives, ladies and gentlemen:

We are in a time of mourning throughout the Philippines and worldwide among the friends of the Filipino nation, as we all pay tribute to this dignified, unassuming, charming and gentle former housewife turned President who led her country through the most trying times. This petite but determined woman will always be remembered through what came to be known as "People Power."

Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino, affectionately called "Tita Cory" by her countrymen, was propelled into the public eye and interest after the assassination of her husband Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983. She was chosen by various opposition groups as their common standard bearer against President Ferdinand Marcos during the 1986 snap presidential elections. The elections were questioned, and Cory Aquino was catapulted to power on the heels of what is known as the People Power Revolution or EDSA I uprising. The uprising she led in 1986 brought down Marcos' 20-year administration and served as an inspiration for democratic movements

worldwide, and afforded and provided a stimulus to non-violent resistance or peaceful protests across the globe for the world's oppressed, including those that ended the communist rule in Eastern Europe. Never in the history of the modern world has a woman been swept into the vortex of history in such an extraordinary manner.

The high esteem worldwide for Cory Aquino became conspicuous when just seven months into her presidency, she delivered a much-applauded and momentous speech before a Joint Session of the US Congress in September 1986.

As President, things were not easy for Cory Aquino. Her government was challenged nine times by rebellious groups but in all these challenges, she and the Filipino people were victorious. Cory Aquino's presidency was prominent mainly for strengthening Philippine democracy despite repeated coup attempts. Her administration drafted and passed a new Constitution and despite numerous pleas that she stay on past her term of office, she successfully passed power to another elected leader, Fidel Ramos.

In retirement, private citizen Cory Aquino, however, has remained in the public eye. Following her most graceful exit from the presidency, Cory Aquino figured most prominently in anti-corruption campaigns as well as in the campaigns for truth and accountability in government and public service. In all these years after returning to be private citizen Cory Aquino, she has actively joined mass actions against electoral fraud, corruption and Charter change. Indeed, it was as though Cory Aquino was back or had never left the high moral ground on which she was propelled into the limelight more than a quarter century ago.

Her infinite goodness even led her to apologize to former President Joseph "Erap" Estrada from his ouster from power as President in 2001.

Indeed, Cory Aquino played a most vital and critical role in Philippine history and her courage, determination and moral leadership are truly, in the words of foreign dignitaries, "an inspiration to us all and exemplify the best in the Filipino nation." Undeniably, Cory Aquino represented the past and future of our people. Her persistent advocacy for democracy and her unwavering faith in the goodness of God are the two things which stand out for all that Cory Aquino had done for our country and the world.

Mr. Speaker, I most solemnly call on all democratic, loving Filipinos to join the House of Representatives in paying tribute to a very special woman who trained us all in what can be achieved with a firm resolve to stand for justice, good governance and freedom. Our country's democracy and ways of government remain most disorderly, even confused, and subject to personality cults. We Filipinos could find no better and proper way of Cory Aquino's brave and heroic legacy than through another peaceful and constitutional transfer of power.

On this solemn note, Mr. Speaker, I most earnestly urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to urgently work for the withdrawal of House Resolution No. 1109 which seeks to amend the Constitution through the convening of a Constituent Assembly, to which resolution our beloved Cory Aquino was openly against, in the context of the untimely departure of our beloved Cory Aquino as well as in the best interest of our country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, the next speaker is the Hon. Joel Maglunsod from Anakpawis Party-List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Gentleman from Anakpawis Party-List is recognized.

REP. MAGLUNSOD. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, Majority Leader, distinguished colleagues:

Mrs. Corazon "Cory" Aquino is now regarded as "global democracy icon" for propelling the Filipino people to overthrow and end the Marcos dictatorship. Our gratitude to Mrs. Aquino for her consistent upholding of democracy and opposition to self-serving tyranny.

Her contribution in restoring democracy in the country will always have its valuable part in Philippine history.

As a political detainee under martial law during the early 1980s, I am one of the 441 political prisoners released by the Aquino administration after People Power I. I was detained in 1984 in Davao City on charges of subversion, rebellion and insurrection. I was released then on March 1986.

One of the highlights of Mrs. Aquino's administration was the granting of P30 across-the-board wage increase in 1987, the last significant legislated wage increase granted by the government for Filipino workers. It is a result of workers' persistent struggle for their unions and democratic rights.

In the recent years up to the last days of her life, Mrs. Aquino remained an influential political figure who fought against the current administration's anomalous scandals like the 2004 election fraud, NBN-ZTE deal corruption, Charter change, among others.

She joined the Filipino people in seeking for the truth. Even in her frail health condition, she inspired people to continue protests against ConAss and the incumbent presidency's "shameful abuse of power."

And even in her passing, Mrs. Aquino still influences the country's political situation as her death continues to unite the people in remembering her and what she did for democracy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, the next to pay tribute is the Hon. Walden Bello from Akbayan Party List.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Gentleman from Akbayan is recognized.

REP. BELLO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The first time I met Cory Aquino was when we visited her in Boston in the United States. She was a person who was very retiring and who gave center stage to her husband, Ninoy Aquino. So, among many of us in the anti-dictatorship movement in the United States, there was a great deal of surprise when, following the developments in the Philippines, she, in fact, emerged as the leader of our country. History

called, and Cory Aquino answered by going beyond herself and that was a very exemplary gesture.

Let me just say that, as a number of our speakers had also said, the Philippines, in 1986, placed itself at the vanguard of the democratic revolution in the developing countries. People Power in the Philippines was followed by similar uprisings in a number of other countries like Chile, South Korea and many others that disposed of their dictatorships and placed democracy on the uptrend. We were an example for the rest of the world.

Mr. Speaker, the Edsa Revolution led by Cory Aquino was our brief shining moment. The Edsa Revolution was our Camelot and Cory Aquino was our King Arthur. Let us remember that, because today we have a democracy that is burdened with corruption, with abuse of power, with loss of trust, with a great deal of cynicism in the population.

Today, Mr. Speaker, it is not the Philippines that is said to be the beacon of democracy in our country, in our region and in the world. It is Indonesia. In fact, the Philippines today is seen as how not to become a democracy.

And so, Mr. Speaker, as we mourn the passing of this great leader of one of the most significant peaceful revolutions in our recent history, let us remember that brief shining moment and her challenge to us to recapture it, to recapture our Camelot, to recapture that time when we were the leading force in the democratic revolution worldwide. Her call, I believe, is for us to rededicate ourselves to democratic processes, to reinvigorate our democracy, to uphold the separation of powers, to again make Philippine democracy a real democracy of the masses.

Our special responsibility as Members of the House of Representatives is to defend the separation of powers, to defend the rights of Congress, to make sure that Congress is not subverted by the Executive. And it is in this context, Mr. Speaker, that I support the resolution proposed by Congressman Rodriguez, in which our best gift to Cory will be to archive House Resolution No. 1109.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Risa Hontiveros would likewise like to render her tribute to the late President.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Lady from Akbayan is recognized.

REP. HONTIVEROS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat, mga kasama.

The best tribute we could give to Cory Aquino is to uphold our independence as an institution. We would not only dance on her grave if we succumb to the caprices of Malacañang, but we would trample upon the very legacy of People Power that Cory symbolizes. If we want to honor her, then Congress must recommit ourselves to uphold freedom against abuse of power so that each and every time the line between liberty and tyranny is drawn, we know to which side we must go. Never again must fear be embedded in our hearts.

Her struggle is not yet over, Mr. Speaker. Nandiyan pa rin ang mga batas at polisiya na minana natin mula sa diktadura. And now, more than ever, we need to echo what we said at the height of martial law—Ituloy ang laban. We need to further the seeds of democracy that Cory and others—many others who have sacrificed their lives—planted.

Para sa ating minamahal na Cory Aquino, paalam at maraming salamat sa iyo. We will take it from here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. VELARDE. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Ed Zialcita of the First District of Parañaque City.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Gentleman from the First District of Parañaque is recognized.

REP. ZIALCITA. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Every conceivable word has been said about President Aquino. I cannot but agree with all of them, but today I wish to speak to you about the person that I knew.

I have had the very rare privilege of serving her as a full-time volunteer for over a year in the Cory Aquino for President Movement, later on as Deputy Minister for Information during her administration as President of the Philippines and, thirdly, as Chairman of the Public Estates Authority.

I wish to speak to you about her most endearing qualities, qualities that public servants like us should emulate, qualities that public servants such as us should try to have because they bring about the best in what is a Filipino, the best in what a public servant should be.

I have culled the word “simpatica.” It is a Spanish word that probably has no equal meaning except to say that the closest to it is “charming.” But I chose that word because it serves as a guide to me to mention the most endearing qualities I have seen in her. Letter “S,” which is the first letter of that word “simpatica,” is sincerity. In all the moments that we were with her during the campaign, during the presidency and even afterwards, she just wanted to serve the country, period. There was no other hidden agenda in the person except pure and simple basic public service. The only single criteria she would use all the time was: is it good for the public? Is it good for the Filipino people? There was no time in her life, in my experience with her, that there was any hidden agenda. What you see is what you get. What she said was what exactly she meant, nothing more, nothing less.

The second letter is the letter “I,” which is “intelligent – intelligence.” Sure, she had no master’s degree, sure she has no Ph.D., but sure enough, she was intelligent, common sense-intelligent. She did not come up with any of these high-falluting solutions to the problems of the country, but plain and simple basic solutions to problems. She had this mysterious way of converting very complex problems into simple problems and therefore, she would always come up with simple solutions. But most endearing in her was she asked people about what they thought the problems were, what they thought about the solutions that she presented. She would always go out of her way to ask people about what they think about certain things.

Next letter is the letter “M,” which is “mild-mannered.” Never during my long association with her did President Cory raise her voice. Never did she show any distaste or disgust. Never did she utter a single bad word in her entire life. The way I saw her, she was mild-mannered, plain and simple; respectful of people’s opinion, direct to the point, plain and simple.

Next letter is the letter “P.” Talk about patience, oh my God, she had plenty of it. When all of us were losing our cool when all of us had flaring tempers, not President Cory. She would always be cool, cool under extreme fire, even in the most difficult circumstances. During the various coups that were attempted against her, she just kept her cool and her coolness was helped by her being a very prayerful person. She would always tell us, “there is always a solution to a problem. Let us keep cool, let us pray because prayers are the most powerful weapon at the end.”

Next letter is the letter “A,” for “alert.” In my entire service to President Cory, never, ever did she ask me for a single favor, never, not one bit, not one second did she utter a word asking for a favor. Never did she do that. The only time she called me maybe four or five times was when there was a negative article about my organization. And sometimes, when there were implications that there were some relatives of hers involved in a particular transaction, she called me. She was alert. She read the newspaper daily and she called me and asked me what was true. And she would always tell me.

“If there is any member of the family that tries to influence you one way or the other, do not ever, ever allow them to use my name because I have never authorized anybody in my entire life to use my name, relative or not. Stick to your job, stick to the principle, stick to what is right. Never, ever be influenced by anyone, especially by members of my family.”

Then the letter “T” is “thoughtfulness.” In spite of all the work the President of the Philippines has, she would take time out and send a birthday greeting, a wedding card, a wedding anniversary card. She would always remember little things about you as a person. And she would always remember the work that you put in, especially during the volunteer days when we were working for her as volunteers for the Cory Aquino for President Movement.

Letter “C” is “care.” I think that is one of the best words that fitly describe President Cory. She was a very, very caring person. She cared about poor people in particular. She cared about the Members of her Cabinet. She cared about all of us, and that is what has endeared her to us today.

And lastly, the letter “O,” which is “open-mindedness.” I think that President Cory, in many instances, had shown the hands of reconciliation. To those who were against her, in particular, she opened the avenues for a dialogue. She always wanted peace and reconciliation. When we started the campaign in 1985, it was almost an impossible dream—we could not believe, we never thought that we could bring down 20 years of dictatorship. But we did because of her resiliency in character, her strength, her courage, her simplicity, her homegrown Filipino values, her sense of dignity, her sense of being a Filipina. That is President Cory, that is Tita Cory to all of us, the epitome of what a good Filipino should be.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the distinguished Gentleman from Cebu, the Hon. Raul Del Mar, for his tribute.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Deputy Speaker from Cebu City is recognized.

REP. DEL MAR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Deputy Majority Leader.

Esteemed colleagues, like the distinguished Majority Leader, I claim no special closeness to President Cory Aquino. And like him also, I worked for former President Cory Aquino. I worked for her, not when she was President, but even before she became President.

I recall that she truly did not want to run for President. I think everyone knows this. I guess she is the only one I know who did not want to run for President. Especially under present times, when everyone wants to run for President. But as far as I know, from the past up to the current President, there is nobody who can honestly say that he or she does not want to run for President except former President Cory Aquino.

But how come she ran for President? The question would be asked. She did so after so much meditation, relenting to the call of the people for her to lead them. Again, so many people ran for public office, saying there is a call for them by the people to run. But most of these politicians here are just hearing things all the time. In her case, the call of the people came in concrete terms. It was in the form of a million signatures which the Cory Aquino for President Movement presented to her as proof that the people sincerely wanted her to lead them. This Cory Aquino for President Movement, CAPM, was led by the late Don Chino Roces. And I know whereof I speak because I was a volunteer coordinator in this movement for Cebu and Region VII. And so, when she relented and made the sacrifice to run for President, I again worked for her as a volunteer campaigner in the political organization of the Aquino-Laurel political movement.

And so, when word came and reports were published in the papers that she was gravely ill, I was in my district in Cebu City and, like most of you, I really wanted to attend the healing masses that were said, that were being held in the Makati Greenbelt church, but I did not have the chance to do so until we opened last Monday.

We resumed, we opened the Third Regular Session of this Fourteenth Congress last Monday. And so after our SONA in the afternoon, the following day, I took the opportunity to participate in the healing mass in the Greenbelt area. And I was not contented with just going there that Tuesday and so, I went again the following day, Wednesday. While I was there, I received the text message from House Secretary General Yap that there was going to be a healing mass in the afternoon at three o’clock. So I rushed here to attend the mass. Why? Because, I really felt that, although I am not really close to her or to her family, I believed in her cause when she ran for President. There was no question that she had to do that because, otherwise, there would be nobody to unite the opposition in the same way as she could and topple the dictatorial regime then existing.

And so, I went to these healing masses because I felt a deep sense of sadness that she was stricken seriously ill. Before the end of the mass here at the House, I was asked to give a few words. I told them that I shared everyone's prayers for a miracle, for former President Cory to recover. But when I went back to Cebu City during the weekend, I read in the newspapers and I heard over the television, and on the radio, that she had passed away.

And so it seems that at first thought, our prayers for a miracle were not answered. But then again, you know, miracles come in many ways. What may be a miracle to some, may not be a miracle to others. I would like to think that there was a miracle in her painless and peaceful death, and for her to be called to heaven to receive her reward for the many good things she had done for our country and people.

And so, I was glad I made it to the mass here in the House that afternoon to join our colleagues in expressing our deep sense of grief on her passing away. And maybe, the miracle is for us to do what our former colleague Deputy Speaker, now Senator Noynoy Aquino, said at the last part of his announcement on the passing away of his beloved mother, was her wish and that is for us to pray for one another and for our country. So, this is something that we, who grieve for her, should do as it is her wish stated in clear, explicit terms.

And so, may I just, in closing, say that in life, former President Cory Aquino, with all selflessness and sincerity, preached and practiced truth and justice, humility and courage in both her public service and private undertakings. In her most endearing way, she shaped and enriched the dreams and aspirations of the young and the old, hurdled the challenges that came her way to preserve and protect the things that freedom-loving Filipinos cherish most, which helped she restore—our freedom and democracy,—nurtured the simple virtue of sharing of blessings with others and demonstrated love of country even under the most difficult circumstances. She was a symbol really of everything that any law-abiding citizen, any leader and teacher of men, any believer in good government, and any disciple of the Catholic faith could deeply aspire for.

In death, former President Cory Aquino, truly a God-given gift to all of us, again showed us the way for coming together in unity. It is therefore, indeed, most fitting and proper for this august Chamber to honor former President Cory Aquino for all the great sacrifices she has done for the country, for all the most precious thoughts and deeds she has shared with the Filipino people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues.

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

REP. VELARDE. Mr. Speaker, we move to recognize the Hon. Antonio Cerilles from the Second District of Zamboanga del Sur for his tribute to former President Corazon Aquino.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Gentleman from the Second District of Zamboanga del Sur is recognized.

REP. CERILLES. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and dear colleagues.

During the snap election in 1986, we campaigned hard for the election of President Marcos. As a matter of fact, in my Province of Zamboanga del Sur, President Marcos won with a slight margin. During the election of 1987, I ran and won as a member of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan. And I was surprised, one day, President Corazon Aquino invited me to breakfast in Malacañang. I was surprised because she does not know me, and I am sure even the middle members of her Cabinet do not want me to be near her. She being the President of the Republic, I went to Malacañang and had breakfast with her. With us was Undersecretary Ching Dumlao-Vargas.

There were so many topics we discussed. I think she was surprised why I won as a KBL despite the Cory magic. I can vividly recall that I told her, "tsamba lang iyon, Ma'm. Marami pong tsamba sa election." She asked me how she fared in the snap election of Zamboanga del Sur. I told her she lost by about 20,000 votes in the entire province. She asked me on specific results in some municipalities. I told her, in all my honesty, the results in some municipalities. And she asked me, if my proposal to enshrine the Autonomous Region in the Constitution was a good one; I said yes because before Edsa I, I was with the Autonomous Region in Region IX and it was only a decree that created the Autonomous Government, PD 1680. And I told her that once enshrined in the Constitution, nobody can abolish that Autonomous Government, and it must be a solution to a lasting peace in Mindanao. That is why I am wondering why we have to deal with external forces or allow foreigners to deal in the internal affairs of the government while the solution to the Mindanao problem is already enshrined in the Constitution. And I am sure that President Corazon Aquino did not incorporate that in the Constitution without consultation with the experts in government.

Indeed, President Aquino is a symbol of peace. I am sure she would like to run the peaceful solution in Southern Philippines in the context of the Autonomous Government.

I am happy that no less than Kris Aquino said in public how her mother has forgiven some personalities, how they are grateful to the Marcoses for their sincere prayers being offered for the health of Corazon Aquino.

Mr. Speaker, what I am trying to say here is, President Aquino would like to unite the Filipino people. EDSA I and EDSA II are things of the past. What she wants is for us to be together, move forward, instead of pulling each other. I am sure, if the divisiveness that we had during EDSA I and II would be out, we can think of a way on how we can solve the problems of our country today. I beg to disagree with some speakers before me that President Aquino does not want ConAss. Remember my friends, the present Constitution we have is the thinking of President Aquino when she appointed 50 men and women to design the present Constitution. And all the powers to amend the Constitution, are enshrined into the present Constitution.

I am not talking here of a Constitutional assembly, what I am talking here is that Congress should not be stifled, should not be constrained, but should exercise its prerogative as a law-making Body. Let us not allow emotion to come into play. What we should always think about is how to address the quality of life of the Filipino people.

President Corazon Aquino is really a symbol of peace. President Corazon Aquino would like us to unite. I am sure

she will also be happy if this Congress can think of solutions on how to improve the life of the Filipino people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Mauricio Domogan from the Lone District of Baguio City for his tribute.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Gentleman from Baguio City is recognized.

REP. DOMOGAN. Thank you, Floor Leader. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we join the Filipino people in paying tribute to former President Corazon Aquino, the icon of our democracy. The people of the Cordilleras will remember her and continue to remember her. It was President Corazon Aquino who signed Executive Order No. 220 on July 15, 1987 that established the special Cordillera Administrative Region that brought nearer to the people of the Cordilleras, the services of government. This is the executive order that created, as I said, the special region of the Cordilleras that gave more power and autonomy for the region to manage itself, to establish its regional identity and to speed up its socioeconomic and infrastructure development.

I am sure that, not only the present people of the Cordilleras, but also the future generation will not forget her for this very important law that she did sign when she was exercising both the executive and legislative powers during her revolutionary government.

As her eyes and her mouth have been glossed over by death, we remember her for what she had done for our country and we join the previous speakers in expressing our deepest condolences to the bereaved family of President Corazon C. Aquino. Let her soul rest in peace.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. VELARDE. Mr. Speaker, I move to recognize the Hon. Valencia from the First District of Oriental Mindoro for his tribute.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Gentleman from the First District of Oriental Mindoro is recognized.

REP. VALENCIA. Mr. Speaker and my dear colleagues, the island of Mindoro owes Tita Cory a lot. Not many people know about this and so, let me share with you why and how the island of Mindoro owes her a lot.

Sometime in 1986 to 1987, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) issued and approved TLA or Timber License Agreement 376 giving license to a big logging company, identified as Oriental Wood Processing Corporation, to cut the timber in about 35,000 to 40,000 hectares of the forest area of Mt. Halcon. The areas covered were Victoria, Naujan, San Teodoro, Puerto Galera and even part of Mamburao in Occidental Mindoro. When

we came to know about the TLA, we Mindoreños—I was then a private person doing business in real estate—fought the TLA. We had made a lot of manifestos. We even consulted, of course, the top ecologists—experts in forestry and ecology. And they told us that, “if you would allow this TLA to happen, forget your island because that will destroy your agriculture, that will destroy your ecological balance; that will, in fact, destroy a lot of things.” So, Mr. Speaker, we came up with a lot of petitions, several thousands of them, but then the DENR just did not bother to look into it or act on the matter.

So it was in 1988 that this Representation decided to run, telling myself that, perhaps, if I can make it, then this license could be cancelled. Because a Congressman, a Member of the House of Representatives, has that clout to talk directly to the President. Luckily, I won. And as I promised my people, I said I am going to fight for it in this House in 1988. The first House resolution that I filed was to have it cancelled. And I was able to arrange a meeting with then President Cory Aquino in Malacañang. I brought with me the Congressman from the Second District, then Congressman Jess Punzalan and the Congressman from Occidental Mindoro, Congressman Jim Mendiola; and I brought with me the presentation materials showing the President that the concession area occupies about 98.3 percent of our watershed.

And so I said, “Mrs. President, please help us and have this cancelled.” It was twelve o’clock noon in Malacañang and she called up Jun Factoran, the Secretary of DENR at that time, and she said, “Jun, there is a petition from Congressman Valencia here and others, for you to cancel this TLA because it is within the watershed of their island.” And so she said, “Right, you may go now to Secretary Factoran. He will wait for you.” I said, “Even at one o’clock, Ma’am?”

She replied: “He will wait for you.”

So, we rushed to DENR and talked with the Secretary at that time, and he promised he will look into it. But four months passed and nothing happened. Our people were worried already.

Then one morning, we were invited to a breakfast in Malacañang—the Chairmen of the various committees in Congress. And after the usual discussion, she opened up the discussion of whatever problems we might want to bring to her. And I stood up and told the President, “Ma’am, this is in connection with the problem of logging in my province which we brought to you here four months ago.” She blushed as she said, “I thought that was already finished? I told Secretary Factoran about it.” I said: “Ma’am, I do not know. But for one reason or another, I do not know, nothing has happened.”

So, she whispered to Secretary Macaraeg right beside her—I do not know what she whispered to him—and then I sat down. I did not know that in the day thereafter, immediately, an executive order was sent to DENR, and I cannot forget the first sentence: “x x x In view of the representation of Representatives Rodolfo Valencia, etc., you are directed to cancel TLA 376. x x x “ And that TLA was cancelled.

My dear colleagues, that to us is like hitting the sweepstakes or the lottery because today, because of what Tita Cory did, Mindoro Island is still one of the green islands.

We still enjoy free-flowing mineral water; we enjoy beautiful waters and rivers; we enjoy our irrigation, etcetera. If not for the cancellation of TLA 376, perhaps, we would not have the same enjoyment. And even our agriculture would have perished already.

So, with that, Mindoro Island will never forget her because we owe a lot to her for saving the mountains of Mindoro, for saving our people. We should have been affected terribly or negatively by this illegal logging.

So, with that, ako po, together with my family and the people of Mindoro, ay nagpapahatid ng aming condolences to the family of former President Cory and the Filipino people.

Maraming salamat po.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Arnulfo Go of the Second District of Sultan Kudarat for his tribute.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Gentleman from the Second District of Sultan Kudarat is recognized.

REP. GO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My dear colleagues, ang Pangalawang Distrito ng Sultan Kudarat ay mayroon pong anim na bayan—bayan ng Lebak, bayan ng Calamansi, bayan ng Palimbang, bayan ng Esperanza, bayan ng Bagumbayan at bayan ng Sen. Ninoy Aquino—kaya dapat lang po magbigay talaga ng tribute sa ating dating President Corazon Aquino.

Mr. Speaker, may I manifest that my prepared speech be entered into *the Record* as a tribute to the late President Corazon Aquino.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Secretary General is so directed to accept the written speech of the Gentleman from the Second District of Sultan Kudarat.

The following is the text of Rep. Go's speech submitted for insertion into the Congressional Record.

Former President Corazon Aquino—a woman of substance, gallantry, faith and integrity.

Just a simple mother and a wife, yet she toppled the infamous dictatorship and rose above in a male-oriented political arena of our country. Because of her, the stature of our nation took a huge leap in the international scene as it showed the world how democracy can be attained through peaceful means. Indeed, she rightly deserves the monicker, “icon of democracy.” She is the best that happened in Philippine history.

And the best tribute that we can give President Cory is to live up to the ideals that she has fought for. We must also thank her family for unselfishly lending President Cory to the Filipino nation.

From the second District of Sultan Kudarat, salamat President Cory!

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. VELARDE. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Abraham Kahlil Mitra of the Second District of Palawan for his tribute.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Gentleman from the Second District of Palawan is recognized.

REP. MITRA. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, Dep. Majority Leader.

Mr. Speaker, the entire country was saddened by the news of the demise of the former President Corazon Aquino just the other day.

Mr. Speaker, former President Aquino, from being a housewife of the martyred Benigno S. Aquino, through an overwhelming public clamour and support, and in order to unify the country, decided to seek the presidency during the snap elections called by former President Ferdinand Marcos in January 1986.

Notwithstanding martial law prevailing, lack of campaign funds and resources, and against the full utilization of vast government resources and with the martial law against her, with faith in God and the people, the late Corazon C. Aquino waged a successful campaign that catapulted her into the presidency of the Republic of the Philippines on February 1986.

Almost immediately after she assumed office, true to her campaign promise, the late President constituted a Constitutional Commission tasked to re-draft the post-martial law Philippine Constitution that was overwhelmingly ratified.

The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines as adopted, being the centerpiece of the administration of the late former President Corazon C. Aquino, guaranteed full civil and political rights to the people, the restoration of democratic institutions like the Supreme Court and the lower courts, the constitutional offices, and the Congress of the Republic of the Philippines to include the House of Representatives.

The restoration of democratic institutions and the guarantee of civil and political rights resulted in the people's trust in the government as well as the acceptance by the international community of the Philippines as a truly democratic state.

The late President Corazon Aquino, in order to bring peace and end divisiveness in the country, initiated and pursued talks with the rebel groups like the New People's Army, the Moro National Liberation Front, and was eventually successful in forging peace agreements with them.

With the people's trust in the government, the hope of peace and prosperity and the acceptance by the international community, foreign investments, both private and public, flowed into the bloodstream of the economy of the Philippines that brought development, livelihood and economic prosperity.

The administration of the late President Corazon C. Aquino was threatened several times by military adventurism, thereby placing the democratic institutions at risk, civil and political rights in peril and the economy in the brink of collapse. Amidst all these, the late Corazon C. Aquino, being the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and living up to her sworn duty to protect the Constitution of the Philippines, the rights of the people and the democratic institutions, stood firm on her ground and took efforts to repel these self-serving mutinous acts.

During the administration of the late President Corazon C. Aquino, numerous laws were passed by this august Body, together with the Philippine Senate, that strengthened civil and political rights and promoted the full restoration of

democratic institutions and the general welfare of the people in general such as the Local Government Code and the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

Twenty-three years, henceforth, these legacies of the late President Corazon Aquino are still the very foundation of our democratic institutions and processes and she, therefore, fittingly deserves to be called an “icon of democracy and peace” not just in the Philippines but in the entire democratic and free world.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, it is but fitting that we give tribute to former President Corazon Aquino, our hero; the wife also of our hero, Ninoy Aquino.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. VELARDE. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Joseph Emilio Abaya of the First District of Cavite for his tribute.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Gentleman from the First District of Cavite is recognized.

REP. ABAYA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to share to the nation and to our colleagues here that I had the distinct honor of serving President Cory as her naval aide-de-camp during her last 10 months in office. I was then a Lieutenant Junior Grade in the Navy and assigned at the *BRP Ang Pangulo*, the presidential yacht which was then under the operational control of the Presidential Security Group.

It was then that a naval aide-de-camp was required, and given the nature or the circumstances then, more senior naval officers were hesitant, considering that it was the last two minutes of a presidential administration; there were no takers at that time. When they resorted to officers within the Presidential Security Group, I was then offered such a position and I readily accepted, thinking that it was an opportunity of a lifetime to serve a President, much more to serve President Cory herself.

She was a real mother not only to the nation, but a real mother even to the aide-de-camps and her family. She treated everyone well, she taught value in every human being who served under her.

And during the time when 20 light anti-armor weapons were stolen from the armory of the Philippine Army, during one of our night-time trips within Metro Manila, I would usually hear a reminder on the radio from General Gazmin, then, to keep our eyes wide open and to be on the lookout for any threats. It was then that a thought came to my mind whether indeed such weapon would be fired on the presidential convoy, then that would pretty much be it for me because the presidential car was not designed to guard against a light, anti-armor weapon.

At this juncture, the Deputy Speaker relinquished the Chair to Rep. Victor E. Agbayani.

It was also then that I became close to her and ultimately, asked myself a question—if I would be willing to take a bullet for her. And talking to myself, I did not even hesitate. Given what she had fought for and what she had stood for and what she had done for our country, I would have honorably taken a bullet for her. We will miss her. We should probably request

everybody to continue to pray for her because I am quite sure that she will be continuing her prayers for us and definitely, we will be looking for her.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Agbayani). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. VELARDE. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Cinchona Cruz-Gonzales of CIBAC Party-List for her tribute.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Rep. Agbayani). The Lady is recognized.

REP. CRUZ-GONZALES. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On August 1, 2009 at 3:18 a.m., the Filipino people lost their mother, Corazon Cojuangco Aquino, the nation's first woman leader who swept away a dictator in the 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution, succumbed to colon cancer.

Cory Aquino was propelled to the presidency via the People Power Revolution in 1986. She was a reluctant housewife who led this country with outmost sincerity and integrity. During the early years of her administration, President Cory convened a Constitutional Convention to frame a new Charter and restore democratic processes and institutions. Her presidency inherited a host of problems, an economy in its worst state since World War II, a burdensome foreign debt, an armed forces corrupted by patronage of the dictatorship and even a burgeoning insurgency. It was also marred by at least six failed coup attempts, political squabbling and a continuing struggle to overhaul a political system dominated by elite clans.

At this juncture, Rep. Agbayani relinquished the Chair to Deputy Speaker Simeon A. Datumanong.

But despite instabilities in her government, President Aquino revitalized the legislature and judiciary, freed political prisoners and commenced peace talks with communists and Moro secessionists. Her administration boosted the moribund economy through deregulation, privatization and decentralization. It dismantled Marcos-era cartels while recovering part of the ill-gotten, well-concealed wealth of the dictator's family and cronies. With the election in 1992 of President Fidel Ramos, her administration accomplished a peaceful political transition perpetuating democracy. After EDSA I, she was the only president who did not plan to perpetuate herself in power.

In her retirement as private citizen, President Cory remained in the public eye, often speaking out against abuses in the government. She fought moves to amend the Constitution during the terms of President Fidel Ramos and his successor. Later on, she became a vocal critic of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

But President Cory Aquino never needed the presidency to lead. All she needed was the example of her life. Her power and influence emanated not from any position in government, but from her convictions, her abiding faith in the goodness of the Filipino, and most importantly, her sincerity. That is a virtue that has been in short supply in public service for many years.

We in CIBAC Party-List are one with the Filipino people in mourning the demise of our dear former President Corazon C. Aquino. Faith in ourselves, faith in our democratic values, faith in God and unity form the legacy that President Cory left us. We may have lost her physical presence, but she will always stay with us, alive in our minds and in our hearts. And to you, our dear President Cory, we say, “farewell and thank you for what you have done for the Filipino people.”

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker, I move that we recognize the Hon. Lorenzo Tañada III for his tribute.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The distinguished Gentleman from Quezon is recognized.

REP. TAÑADA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A lot has been said about President Cory Aquino. I would like to share also my own thoughts. It is not a secret that the Tañadas and the Aquinos have known each other for more than 50 years. I personally met Tita Cory a few days after Ninoy Aquino was assassinated. We were a small bunch of youth leaders, not even youth leaders but children of opposition leaders, nephews and nieces of Ninoy Aquino who were going around the different areas in the metropolis announcing that Senator Aquino would be arriving. On that fateful day, Senator Ninoy Aquino was assassinated. That same group took care of the preparations for the public viewing of the remains of Senator Ninoy Aquino at Times Street.

I was one of that group. I was one of the members of that group. And if I am not mistaken, on August 23 or August 24, Tita Cory arrived from Boston. We had to stop the public viewing for an hour so that the family could spend time with Senator Ninoy Aquino. And after an hour, the public viewing resumed.

A few minutes later, the nephews and nieces, and myself were called in inside Times Street and I was introduced to Tita Cory by her sibling, Tita Tessie. And Tita Tessie said, “This is Erin Tañada” and Tita Cory asked, “How are you related to Senator Lorenzo Tañada?” I told her that I was one of the grandsons and she replied, “Senator Lorenzo Tañada has done a lot for Ninoy and here you are giving your time to us to help in this difficult days with Senator Ninoy Aquino.” And she said thank you to me and that was the start of a relationship. We would see each other in the different rallies that were held after the assassination of Senator Ninoy Aquino. Tita Cory was a fixture in rallies in Liwasang Bonifacio, in Mendiola, in Luneta, in Ayala, in all other places in the country, just to bring the message that our country should be free and that our country should be democratic.

She has always been grateful to all those who helped in the cause, those nameless and faceless people who have marched with her in the streets. In return, it is but fitting that we recognize her sacrifices for the country by making January 25 “Cory Aquino day.”

If my colleagues will permit to read a joint resolution that was referred earlier so that it can be part of the records:

“Whereas, former President Corazon “Tita Cory” C. Aquino, the nation’s 11th President passed away peacefully at the dawn of August 1, 2009;

Whereas, she was married to the late Senator Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino, Jr., one of the leading lights of the Liberal Party as he served as the party’s Secretary General from 1969 until his assassination in 1983;

Whereas, she is known to be not just the Philippines’ but Asia’s Joan of Arc of Democracy;

Whereas, she never really wanted to lead but when she was asked to, she never wavered and restored democracy in this nation;

Whereas, it was under her stint

- that the Philippines gained respect all over the world for the peaceful transition to democracy,

- that a Constitution, asserting the country’s sovereignty and imbued with nationalist ideals was ratified by our people,

- that thus far, the most radical comprehensive agrarian reform program of the country was enacted into law,

- that the highly questionable, over-priced and debt-ridden Bataan Nuclear Power Plant Project was mothballed,

- that earnest efforts to achieve peace between the government and the Muslim secessionists and the New People’s Army were initiated;

Whereas, President Aquino knew what her objective was and when she achieved it, she knew it was time to pass the “baton”;

Whereas, even as a private citizen, she was the moral compass of the country, serving as a beacon to thwart attempts to curtail democracy and a leading figure in the fight for good governance;

Whereas, she was the nation’s pillar of strength and unity, in life and even in death;

Whereas, the nation lost a great leader and heroine;”

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. AGBAYANI. Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. AGBAYANI. With the indulgence of our colleagues, we would like to request the Chair to acknowledge the presence of the guests of Congressman Emil Ong and Congresswoman Daryl Abayon from the Second District of Samar. Mr. Speaker, we have the Mayor of Gamay, Dr. Tim Capoquian, and all his Barangay Captains led by ABC President, Sangguaniang Bayan Member Honorio Rebay. (Applause)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). The visitors from the Province of Samar are recognized and the Chair acknowledges their presence.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, may I move for one-minute suspension of the session.

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

It was 6:43 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:44 p.m., the session was resumed.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). I move that we take up the Business for the Day.

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

CONSIDERATION OF H.JT.RES. NO. 40

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Joint Resolution No. 40 under Committee Report No. 2240.

May I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the measure have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the title thereof without prejudice to inserting its text in the Congressional Record.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Joint Resolution No. 40, entitled: RESOLUTION MOURNING THE PASSING OF FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON C. AQUINO, CONDOLING WITH THE AQUINO FAMILY, VOWING TO UPHOLD AND PROTECT DEMOCRACY FOR WHICH PRESIDENT AQUINO LIVED AND FOUGHT FOR AND DECLARING FOR THIS PURPOSE, EVERY 25TH DAY OF JANUARY AS A NATIONAL CELEBRATION FOR THE "CORY AQUINO DAY."

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

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). May I move for a one-minute suspension of the session.

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

It was 6:45 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:46 p.m., the session was resumed.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, I move for the approval of the following amendments:

On page 2, last paragraph, delete the phrase "MOURN THE PASSING OF FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON C. AQUINO, CONDOLE WITH THE AQUINO FAMILY,";

On the same page, same paragraph, delete the phrase "PRESIDENT CORY AQUINO" and in lieu thereof, insert the phrase FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON C. AQUINO.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). Is there any objection to the amendments? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the amendments are approved.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, I move that the title be replaced to read as follows: JOINT RESOLUTION UPHOLDING AND PROTECTING THE DEMOCRACY THAT FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON C. AQUINO LIVED AND FOUGHT FOR, DECLARING FOR THIS PURPOSE EVERY 25TH DAY OF JANUARY AS A NATIONAL CELEBRATION FOR THE "CORY AQUINO DAY."

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The title of the resolution has been just amended.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, I move that the Hon. Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Prospero Nograles, be made principal coauthor of said joint resolution.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we approve House Joint Resolution No. 40 as contained in Committee Report No. 2240.

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

This is a joint resolution.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). As many as are in favor of approving House Joint Resolution No. 40 as amended, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

APPROVAL OF H. JT. RES. NO. 40

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). As many as are against, please say *nay*. (*Silence*) The *ayes* have it; the motion is approved.

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

House Joint Resolution No. 40 is approved on Second Reading.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, I move that all the Members of the House of Representatives be made coauthors of said House joint resolution.

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

All the Members of the House of Representatives are made coauthors of the joint resolution.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). In view of the passing away of the former President Corazon Aquino, the leadership has decided that we shall not hold session tomorrow to allow all the Members of the House of Representatives to pay their last respects to the former President of the Philippines.

I therefore move that the House suspend session to adjourn up to next week or for tomorrow? For tomorrow only.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 6:50 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, in view of the passing away of President Corazon Aquino, the leadership has decided that we shall not hold session tomorrow to enable the Members of the House of Representatives to pay their last respects to the President at the Manila Cathedral. We wish to make that on record, Mr. Speaker, that there shall be no session tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, in deference to the death of former President Corazon Aquino, I move that we take up House Resolution No. 1300, and the Secretary General be directed to read the title of the said resolution.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

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

It was 6:52 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:52 p.m., the session was resumed.

CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. NO. 1300

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, I move that we take up House Resolution No. 1300.

May I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

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

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

With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the measure have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the title thereof without prejudice to inserting its text in the Congressional Record.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 1300, entitled: RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FAMILY OF HER EXCELLENCY, CORAZON COJUANGCO AQUINO, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker.

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

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 1300.

I so move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). Is there any objection?

ADOPTION OF H. RES. NO. 1300

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, may I amend my motion.

I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 1300 in consolidation with House Resolutions No. 1302, 1303, 1304 and 1307.

I so move.

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

House Resolution No. 1300 is adopted in consolidation with House Resolutions No. 1302, 1303 and 1304.

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). And also House Resolution No. 1307.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Datumanong). And also House Resolution No. 1307.

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

* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, I move that all Members of the House of Representatives be made coauthors of House Resolution No. 1300.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

All the Members of the House of Representatives are made coauthors of the resolution.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR (A.). Mr. Speaker, considering that

August 5, Wednesday, has been declared a special non-working holiday by the President of the Philippines, I move that we adjourn until four o'clock in the afternoon on Monday, next week.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

The session is adjourned until four o'clock next Monday afternoon.

It was 6:55 p.m.
