



LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE
KEY POINTS OF PLENARY PROCEEDINGS
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1. Privilege Speech of Senator Estrada

Senator Estrada brought to the Chamber's attention the latest development on the case of the abused *kasambahay*, Elvie Vergara, which the Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights is investigating.

The Senator narrated that Elvie's former coworker "Dodong," a witness to the maltreatment suffered by Elvie from her employers, is now in the custody of the Criminal Investigation and Detention Group (CIDG) in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro, after an attempt on the latter's life by a riding-in-tandem. Dodong, who escaped from the Ruiz family who was his former employers, has executed a sworn statement before the fiscal's office where serious physical injuries, illegal detention, and violation of RA 10361 or Batas Kasambahay were filed against the Ruiz family.

Senator Estrada believed it was necessary to provide additional security for Dodong, his present employers, who also fear for their lives, and even to aliases JM and Patrick if they agreed to testify before the Committee.

Manifestation of Senator Dela Rosa

Senator Dela Rosa associated himself with the speech. He stated that public order is something that needs to be focused on. He noted that the shooting incident was not an attempt but a frustrated murder. Moreover, as chairperson of the Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs, he expressed his dismay since ordinary citizens like Dodong requested that they be referred to the CIDG rather than to the police authorities because the suspects are very influential. Saying that he may be misconstrued for his statement, the Senator assured the local police they have his complete trust and confidence.

Manifestation of Senator Villanueva

The Majority Leader also joined Senator Estrada in condemning the harassment against Dodong. He said he was saddened that police authorities from their community could not even protect the victims. He hoped, once again, that the Senate would stand up to defend the marginalized sector of society just like it did before.

Manifestation of Senator Tolentino

Senator Tolentino assured the Chamber that the Committee on Justice and Human Rights would do everything and act expeditiously in order to attain justice for Elvie Vergara. He said that together with Senator Dela Rosa, they collaborated with the regional police director of MIMAROPA, Gen. Joel Doria, who then assured them of Dodong's security. Dodong is now with the CIDG Calapan, and the Committee is moving forward to place Elvie Vergara under the WPP. He also said that the Committee has provided free legal services for Elvie Vergara and medical services with the assistance of Senators Padilla and Estrada.

Manifestation of Senator Estrada

Senator Estrada informed the Body that the siblings of Elvie Vergara have been requesting that they be provided with additional security and placed under the Witness Protection Program (WPP).

Manifestation of Senator Padilla

Senator Padilla wished they would be as mad and even angrier in condemning the abuse and maltreatment inflicted on Elvie Vergara because it happened right here in the country as when they strongly condemned the abuses and maltreatment suffered abroad by overseas Filipino workers.

2. Senate Bill No. 2386 under Committee Report No. 99

An Act Instituting Reforms in Real Property Valuation and Assessment in the Philippines, Reorganizing the Bureau of Local Government Finance, and Appropriating Funds Therefor

Sponsor : Sen. Win Gatchalian

Interpellation of Senator Hontiveros

Preliminarily, Senator Hontiveros cited some concerns that homeownership might cost more by the sudden increase in official land valuations that may arise because of the bill. She then inquired if it would be an accurate statement that the new market values in the schedule of market values would be higher than the existing market values and the zonal valuations of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).

In reply, Senator Gatchalian explained that it would really depend on the value of a particular location because there are areas that are not attractive to buyers and they do not want to invest there, but there are also areas that enjoy regular increases because their location is attractive to private buyers and investors.

The Sponsor pointed out that zonal valuations made by the BIR are always higher than the market values declared by the LGUs because the BIR regularly updates its zonal valuation simply through administrative action. In contrast, the

LGUs do not update their market values regularly. Thus, the bill intends to update the market values.

Senator Gatchalian further explained that there are three variables used to determine the tax due: 1) the schedule of market value, which the bill seeks to standardize so that the values would be at par or at least the same with the other government agencies; 2) assessment level; and 3) tax rate. The Senator emphasized that the LGUs would have full control over what assessment value they would place and what tax rate they would impose on a particular asset;

Asked to provide simulations on the effects of the bill, in particular the average increase in terms of percentage in real estate valuations, Senator Gatchalian stated that based on the data provided by the BLGF, the values being used by a local government unit are very low compared to the actual market value, and the reason for this, he said, is that in most cases, the LGUs do not update their market values. As a consequence, insofar as the LGUs are concerned, their market values are quite unrealistic compared to the actual market value being transacted in their locality. The true or real value is the value declared by the BIR, he said, because the zonal valuation captures the most recent actual sales or transactions in the area.

Senator Pimentel interjected and noted that earlier, the Sponsor mentioned a revenue regulation on how to determine the zonal value. He then asked where to get the market value. In reply, Senator Gatchalian cited the three different values from the BIR, the private appraisers, and the provincial/municipal assessors.

As regards Senator Hontiveros' query on the average percentage increase vis-à-vis the official real estate valuations, Senator Gatchalian stated that if the schedules of market values of the 10 LGUs indicated in the table were updated and placed them near the zonal valuation of the BIR, the average increase is about 1,557%.

Senator Hontiveros inquired how much the projected additional income the LGUs would receive, supposing the bill is enacted into law. Senator Gatchalian replied that based on the BLGF's simulation, at the very minimum, the revenue that can be collected would be about P18 billion nationwide, assuming the LGUs will touch on their assessed value and tax rate. Still, if they want a status quo in terms of tax due, it could be a zero increase. He said he would want the sanggunian to approve an ordinance to update the schedule of market value based on recent transactions. Still, they would not be dictated on what assessment levels and tax rates they want to impose in their respective localities.

Citing the differing behaviors of LGUs, Senator Hontiveros asked what would make one LGU hold the two other variables (assessment level and tax rate) constant and what make another LGU either raise them or lower them.

Senator Gatchalian admitted that based on what he has seen in many LGUs, politics dictates heavily on whether they should update their market values, assessment levels, and tax rates; traditionally, they do not touch the market values but instead raise the assessment levels. Thus, he underscored the need to change such mindset and make their market values realistic while maintaining their power to do whatever they want on the assessment levels and tax rates. He noted that even the Local Government Code calls for fair market value, the most basic principle of which is the most recent transaction in the area.

Asked what would happen if a sanggunian fails to enact a tax ordinance within the period provided in the bill, the Sponsor replied that the existing tax ordinance and the Revenue Code would remain in effect, and the previous SMV would be enforced.

On whether the Committee considered suspending the implementation of the schedule of market values until after the local sanggunian can update their assessment levels and tax rates, Senator Gatchalian replied that the Committee will study the proposal, emphasizing that the basic concept is to update the market values, furnish the local sanggunian, and the local sanggunian will enact an updated revenue ordinance accordingly.

As regards the effect of a sudden increase of land valuation on capital gains tax, as well as taxes on transfers in general, such as donation and inheritance, Senator Gatchalian stated that there are areas where the market value is below the zonal valuation, and there are areas where the market value is higher than the zonal valuation. But on average, he pointed out, the zonal valuation is responsive to the actual transacted price in the area. He said that the zonal valuation is placed among the variables to be considered and serves as a floor for capital gains tax because of the prevalence of undervaluing the transacted price. He affirmed that the effect of the tax burden would be the same whether it is a sale, donation, or inheritance.

Asked how the homeowners would be protected from the adverse effect of the sudden increase in valuations, Senator Gatchalian believed that the LGUs will always be protective of and responsive to the clamor of their constituents, and he assumed that they will maintain the status quo of the tax due. He agreed with Senator Hontiveros that in updating the market values, the bill requires the local assessor to conduct two consultative meetings and public consultations.

On how to ensure that the possible increase of transfer taxes would not unnecessarily burden prospective homeowners, the Sponsor believed that the effect would not be that high because the zonal valuation is not so far off from the market value.

To the suggestion to provide a period to ensure a smooth transition to a new regime of market values, the Sponsor cited a provision in the bill empowering the LGU to suspend the application of the schedule of market values. He agreed to introduce a transitory mechanism to address the concern of Senator Hontiveros.

Asked how the higher property valuation would affect the cost of expropriating property for a government project, Senator Gatchalian cited the two types of expropriation being done in the country:

- 1) National expropriation, through the DPWH, which uses different methods in coming out with a fair value – through appraisers, local government tax declarations, and BIR zonal valuation; and
- 2) Local expropriation through the concerned LGU, which uses the fair market value.

Fair market value is based on the tax declaration, and most LGUs have very low fair market value in their tax declaration. While it is advantageous to the LGUs, it is not fair to the property owner, so the effect would be to file an expropriation case, clogging, in the process, the local courts.

Senator Gatchalian affirmed Senator Hontiveros' observation that the bill will prevent the clogging in the local courts of expropriation cases because, under the bill, there will only be one value, and the tax declaration will be updated accordingly.

3. Senate Bill No. 2233 under Committee Report No. 71

An Act Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and For Other Purposes

Sponsor : Sen. Joseph Victor "JV" G. Ejercito
Cosponsors : Sen. Juan Miguel "Migz" F. Zubiri
Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr.
Sen. Win Gatchalian
Sen. Joel Villanueva
Sen. Sonny Angara

Amendments of Senator Ejercito

Senator Ejercito proposed, and the Body approved, among others, these amendments, to wit:

- On page 2, lines 10 to 11, deletion of the phrase "in accordance with relevant laws, rules, and regulations."
- On the same page, line 25, after the word "the" and before the word "contract", insertion of the acronym PPP;
- On page 3, lines 9 to 10, deletion of the phrase "and which shall undertake" and replace it with the phrase THAT SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR;
- On the same page, lines 12 to 13, deletion of the phrase "with legal personality authorized under existing laws" and replacing it with the phrase ALLOWED AND DULY REGISTERED AND LICENSED UNDER PHILIPPINE LAWS;
- On page 5, deletion of lines 23 to 25, starting with the word "which" until the word "and";
- On the same page, line 31, after the word "which", insertion of the phrase HAS SUBMITTED A BID IN RELATION TO A SOLICITED PROJECT, OR A PRIVATE SECTOR ENTITY WHICH;
- on page 5, line 32 to page 6, line 1, deletion of the phrase "or a bid submission in relation to a Solicited Project";
- On page 6, lines 28 to 29, deletion starting with the comma (,) after the word "Partner" until the word "Operator";

- On page 7, line 2, insertion of a period (.) after the word “cap,” and insertion of the paragraph:

SUBSIDY SHALL ALSO INCLUDE VIABILITY GAP FUNDING (VGF) WHICH MAY BE EXTENDED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE AN ECONOMICALLY VIABLE REVENUE-BASED PPP PROJECT FINANCIALLY VIABLE: *PROVIDED*, THAT GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS FOR ROW, RESETTLEMENT, AND EXEMPTION FROM REAL PROPERTY TAXES SHALL NOT BE CONSIDERED AS VGF;

- On the same page, line 7, deletion of the phrase starting from the word “proposal” until the end of line 9, and replacing it with PROPOSAL MADE BY A PRIVATE PROPONENT TO UNDERTAKE A PPP PROJECT PURSUANT TO SECTION 10 OF THIS ACT;
- On page 7, deletion of the entire item “(dd)” following the proposed consolidation with the definition of *Subsidy*;
- On the same page, delete lines 26 to 28;
- On page 8, deletion of lines 1 to 10, starting with the word "where" until the word "agreement" on line 10 and replacing them with AS DEFINED IN THIS ACT;
- On the same page, line 24, after the word "Act", insertion of a comma (,) and the phrase OR AS MAY BE APPROVED BY THE APPROPRIATE APPROVING BODY;
- On page 9, line 20, before the word "regional", insertion of the article THE, and after the acronym “(RDCs)”, insertion of the phrase CONCERNED, THE LOCAL SANGGUNIAN CONCERNED;
- On page 9, deletion of lines 9 to 30;
- on page 12, line 12, after the words “prior to” adding the phrase ENDORSEMENT OF THE LDC CONCERNED AND;
- On page 12, line 17, deletion of the phrase "RDCs for PPP Projects with proposed national Government Undertakings and/or those that affect national and sectoral development plans" and replacing it with: (I) LDCs FOR LOCAL PPP PROJECTS TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY LGUs; AND OF THE (II) RDCs FOR PPP PROJECTS WITH PROPOSED GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKINGS USING NATIONAL GOVERNMENT FUNDS, AND/OR THOSE THAT AFFECT NATIONAL OR SECTORAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS;
- on page 12, line 32, to page 13, line 1, deletion of the phrase “pursuant to Republic Act No. 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991”;
- On page 13, line 13, deletion of the phrase “issued by the NEDA Board-ICC”;
- On the same page, line 14, after the word “deviations”, insertion of the phrase TO THE PREFERRED RISK ALLOCATION;

- On the same page, lines 19-20, deletion of the phrase starting with the word "Upon" until the word "requirements" and replacing them with UPON SUBMISSION OF COMPLETE.
- On the same page, deletion of lines 23 to 26 starting with the word "in" after the acronym "(PTCS)", and replacing them with CONSIDERING THE NATURE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE PPP PROJECT;
- On page 14, deletion of lines 1 to 17, and replacing them with:

(D) THE DECISION OF THE APPROPRIATE APPROVING BODY SHALL BE RENDERED IN WRITING WITHIN ONE HUNDRED TWENTY (120) CALENDAR DAYS FROM RECEIPT OF COMPLETE REQUIREMENTS.

THE FAILURE OF THE APPROPRIATE APPROVING BODY TO RENDER ITS DECISION ON THE PROJECT WITHIN THE SPECIFIED PERIOD SHALL BE DEEMED AN APPROVAL THEREOF, AND THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCY CONCERNED MAY PROCEED WITH THE PROCUREMENT OF THE PPP PROJECT, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO ANY LIABILITY THAT THE ERRING OR NEGLIGENT OFFICIALS OR EMPLOYEES MAY INCUR UNDER THIS ACT AND OTHER EXISTING LAWS.

TO FACILITATE THE EXPEDIENT PROCESSING OF NATIONAL AND LOCAL PPP PROJECTS REQUIRING NEDA BOARD AND NEDA BOARD-ICC ACTIONS, MEETINGS OF SUCH BODIES SHALL BE HELD MONTHLY, UNLESS NO PROJECTS ARE SET FOR REVIEW OR EVALUATION.

(E) THE NEDA BOARD-ICC, IN THE CASE OF NATIONAL PPP PROJECTS, AND THE PPP GOVERNING BOARD, IN THE CASE OF LOCAL PPP PROJECTS SHALL FORMULATE GUIDELINES FORMS AND TEMPLATES THAT SHALL BE USED BY THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCY AND THE APPROPRIATE APPROVING BODY IN REVIEWING AND APPROVING THE PPP PROJECT. THE NEDA BOARD-ICC SHALL ALSO FORMULATE GUIDELINES ON THE APPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKINGS USING NATIONAL GOVERNMENT FUNDS FOR LOCAL PPP PROJECTS.

- On page 15, insertion as a new last paragraph of Section 8:

IF THE EXECUTED PPP CONTRACT CONTAINS PROVISION/S WHICH ARE CONTRARY WITH THE APPROVED PTCs AND ARE GROSSLY DISADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT, THE CONTRACT SHALL BE NULL AND VOID, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE PROVISIONS UNDER SECTION 32 OF THIS ACT.

- On page 15, line 31, deletion of the phrase "may proceed to consider" and replacing it with SHALL AWARD THE PPP CONTRACT TO;
- On page 16, deletion of lines 1 to 4, and replacing them with:

IN CASE THE PPP CONTRACT IS AWARDED TO THE NEXT MOST RESPONSIVE BIDDER, THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCY, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE REMEDIES PROVIDED BY LAW, CAN FORFEIT THE BID SECURITY, WITHDRAW THE AWARD, OR PURSUE ANY OTHER REMEDIES ALLOWED UNDER EXISTING RULES AND REGULATIONS, AGAINST THE WINNING BIDDER WHO FAILED TO COMPLY WITH ANY POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS.

- On page 17, replacing lines 8 to 13 with the phrase:

UPON RECEIPT OF AN UNSOLICITED PROPOSAL, AN IMPLEMENTING AGENCY MAY EITHER:

(1)REJECT THE PROPOSAL IF SUCH PROPOSAL IS DEEMED INCONSISTENT WITH THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS OF THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCY, OR IF THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCY IS ALREADY DEVELOPING A PROJECT WITH A SIMILAR SCOPE AND/OR SIMILAR OBJECTIVE; OR

(2)DECIDE TO PROCESS SUCH PROPOSAL, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN THIS SECTION.

AN UNSOLICITED PROPOSAL, WHICH AN IMPLEMENTING AGENCY DECIDES TO PROCESS PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (A) (2) ABOVE, SHALL BE EVALUATED FOR COMPLETENESS: PROVIDED THAT, UNSOLICITED PROPOSALS REQUIRING APPROVAL OF THE NEDA BOARD OR THE NEDA BOARD-ICC SHALL BE SUBMITTED TO THE PPP CENTER FOR DETERMINATION OF COMPLETENESS. IN SUCH CASES, THE PPP CENTER SHALL THEREAFTER ENDORSE THE COMPLETE UNSOLICITED PROPOSALS TO THE APPROPRIATE IMPLEMENTING AGENCY.

THE DETERMINATION OF COMPLETENESS SHALL BE CONDUCTED WITHIN TEN (10) CALENDAR DAYS UPON RECEIPT OF THE UNSOLICITED PROPOSAL. ALL UNSOLICITED PROPOSALS THAT ARE DETERMINED TO BE INCOMPLETE SHALL BE RETURNED TO THE PRIVATE PROPONENT BY THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCY OR THE PPP CENTER, AS THE CASE MAY BE.

IF THE UNSOLICITED PROPOSAL IS DETERMINED TO BE COMPLETE, THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCY MAY:

(1)CONTINUE PROCESSING THE UNSOLICITED PROPOSAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION; OR

(2)DECIDE TO BID OUT THE PROPOSAL AS A SOLICITED PROJECT, PURSUANT TO SECTION 9 OF THIS ACT.

IN ALL THE CASES CONTEMPLATED ABOVE, THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCY SHALL STATE IN WRITING WITH CORRESPONDING JUSTIFICATION THE ACTION IT DECIDES TO TAKE ON THE UNSOLICITED PROPOSAL.

IF THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCY FAILS TO ACT ON AN UNSOLICITED PROPOSAL, THREE (3) CALENDAR DAYS AFTER THE

END OF THE DETAILED EVALUATION PERIOD, THE PROJECT PROPOSAL SHALL BE DEEMED REJECTED, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO ANY LIABILITY THAT THE ERRING OR NEGLIGENT OFFICIALS OR EMPLOYEES MAY INCUR UNDER THIS ACT AND/OR EXISTING LAWS.

THE DECISION OF THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCY ON THE UNSOLICITED PROPOSAL SHALL BE DEEMED FINAL AND NON-APPEALABLE.

4. Senate Bill No. 2439 under Committee Report No. 120

An Act Institutionalizing the Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System, Mandating Its Use in Policy and Decision-Making, Designating the Agencies Responsible For Its Implementation, Providing Institutional Arrangements Among Responsible Agencies, and Appropriating Funds Therefor

Sponsor : Sen. Loren Legarda
Cosponsor : Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr.

Sponsorship Speech of Senator Legarda

Senator Legarda stated that one needs imagination to appreciate natural capital since it is tied up with actual stocks, fruits, vegetables, timber, and mines and invisible relationships and processes, benefits, and services.

According to the Senator, there is still so much to know and understand about the services that nature gives. Unfortunately, mankind failed to value what they do not know, and they have been unable to account for it, resulting in lack of understanding of what they are gaining or losing.

Senator Legarda stated that the bill responds to the loud call of the times and 1) provides indicators that will integrate the concerns of nature in planning, policymaking, and budgeting; 2) adopts the international standards under the SEDA; 3) ensures interagency coordination to link natural capital information with the performance of agency mandates; 4) defines natural capital stock as a stock of renewable and nonrenewable resources including plants, animals, air, water, soil, ores, and minerals that provide a flow of benefits to people and living things.

By institutionalizing a Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System (PENCAS), Senator Legarda said that the government hopes to integrate environmental inputs and outputs in determining national income accounts to reflect a more accurate state of development and economic performance.

In addition to the gross national product and other usual indicators, according to the Senator, the citizenry will be informed of nature's contribution to the economy by ensuring a list of officially designated statistics on the depletion, degradation, and restoration of natural capital, environmental protection, expenditures, pollution in the quality of land, air, and water, environmental damage, and adjusted net savings.

Moreover, the Senator stated that the bill:

- names relevant departments to ensure the generation of the necessary data on natural capital: DENR, DA, DOE;
- mandates for the DepEd, PRC DOF, DHSUD, and DILG to enhance the use of natural capital indicators in their work;
- mandates NEDA to include NCA in national and regional development priorities based on the usefulness of the accounts in policy analysis, development planning, and investment programming;
- designates the PSA to oversee PENCAS' implementation and create the Environment, Natural Resources, and Ecosystem Account Service (ENREAS) under their Sectoral Statistics Office; and
- requires the DENR to expand data generation on NCA.

To ensure that the agencies comply and get as much participation as possible, Senator Legarda noted that the following were provided in the bill: 1) institution of mechanisms requiring public consultations; and 2) inclusion of a provision giving any citizen the standing to compel the performance of any of the mandates under the proposal and to seek justification from any government agency that may have ignored or neglected PENCAS accounts and indicators in their policy or decision-making.

Lastly, the Senator noted that there is always a possibility that NCAs can be used to value what can be extracted and feign ignorance of all accompanying processes. Hence, to prevent this, the bill has provisions on environment impact assessment (EIA) and the rights of nature, recognizing its intrinsic and inherent value.

Motion of Senator Villanueva that the cosponsorship speech of Senator Revilla be inserted into the *Record*

Manifestation of Senator Hontiveros

Senator Hontiveros lauded the Sponsor for championing the enactment of the PENCAS, a law covering the entire archipelago, including the ecosystems within it. She said two incidents come to mind, citing a US ship that ran aground, damaging the Tubbataha Reefs and the Chinese vessels dredging the country's seabed to create artificial islands. The Senator said that once it becomes law, the PENCAS would provide a way to compute the environmental damage that is owed to the country.

Manifestation of Senator Villanueva

The Majority Leader believed that the PENCAS bill would complement his bill, Senate Bill No. 577, which would give access to information to extractive industries so that the country would know the extent of damage they cause to the environment.

He recalled that in a Senate hearing, it was revealed that the DPWH alone has been spending P1 billion a day for flood control programs, an amount that should instead be spent on environmental programs.

He further pointed out that with the many dams in his home province, they expected improved service and access to clean water. Still, ironically, he said, even as the area is a primary source of water, water in Bulacan is more expensive than in Metro Manila.

He hoped that with the PENCAS bill, there would be clear accounting measures that would determine the resource of a locality and whether it would be worth sacrificing its value in favor of a project, be it a government project or a private project.

5. Manifestation of Senator Legarda

Senator Legarda informed the Body of the 125th anniversary of the opening of the Malolos Congress on September 15, 2023. She recalled that the assembly of representatives gathered in the Church of Barasoain, Malolos Bulacan, to create laws that would govern the newly-born Filipino nation.

She stated that in the Constitution that the Malolos Congress produced, civil liberties, such as the freedom of religion, the right to privacy, the right to due process, the separation of Executive, Legislative, and Judicial powers, and the autonomy and empowerment of local governments were introduced to national consciousness. She added that the country sent representatives to various world cities who brought copies of the Malolos Constitution and news of the country's victories. Although the republic borne out of a struggle for freedom was interrupted by American colonial rule, the Filipinos never stopped fighting for independence, and the Filipinos continued to defend it from internal and external threats.

She then asked everyone to extend full support to all who have been given the task of telling and retelling their stories, most especially the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, the lead agency in sustaining the memory of the nascent republic by maintaining the Museo ng Republika ng 1899 in Barasoain and by marking the places connected with a rich republican story.

Senate President Zubiri recalled that his great-grandfather Pablo Ocampo Sr. was a representative and the first secretary, while Pablo Ocampo's cousin, Pedro Paterno, was the Malolos Congress president.

Senator Legarda recalled that her great-grandfather, Ariston Hella, was the Antique representative in the Malolos Congress.

Senator Villanueva informed the Body that before the Malolos Congress and the Biak-na-Bato Republic, there was the Kakarong Republic, which had a complete set of officials, with Canuto Villanueva, who was his great-great-grandfather as the Supreme Chief and Captain General of the military forces, and Eusebio Roque as the head of the Katipunan local organization.

Senator Villanueva narrated that the Kakarong Republic was attacked by Spaniards that massacred the katipuneros. According to him, Gen. Eusebio Roque was captured by the Spaniards at the end of the battle; 600 Cazadore soldiers

fought in the Kakarong de Sili battle; and 1,024 were killed in about 70 plus significant battles.

The session was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.