

Republic of the Philippines

Department of Education

Region VII, Central Visayas

DIVISION OF CEBU PROVINCE

Sudlon, Lahug, Cebu City



DIVISION MEMORANDUM

No. 386 s. 2014

FREE WALK FOR TEACHERS' SALARY INCREASE

To: Assistant Superintendents
Education Supervisors/Coordinators
District Supervisors/OICs
Secondary School Heads

1. Attached is a communication from Mrs. Antonia Maamo – Lim, Regional President, ACT –Region 7 Chapter, dated August 18, 2014, which is self-explanatory.
2. Immediate and wide dissemination of this Memorandum is desired.

ARDEN D. MONISIT, Ed.D.
Schools Division Superintendent

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arden D. Monisit", is written over the typed name and title.



ALLIANCE OF CONCERNED TEACHERS – REGION 7 UNION

REGIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

18 August 2014

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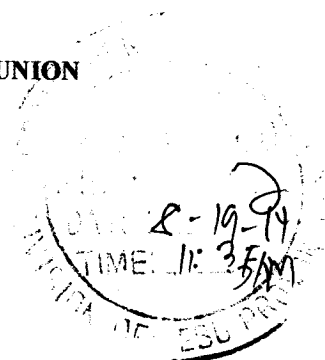
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Dear Sir:

Mabuhay from ACT-Region 7 Union!

Last August 4, 2014, DepEd officials led by Bro. Armin Luistro met with members of Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) and addressed the concerns of teachers when it comes to salary increase, among other issues.

During the dialogue, Luistro reiterated DepEd's support for salary increase. In a dialogue, Bro. Luistro assured the members of ACT that DepEd will support the teachers' clamor for salary increase and that DepEd will serve as their "voice and bridge" in lobbying for this demand.

Nine House Bills filed at the House of Representatives including House Bill 245 or An Act Increasing the Minimum Monthly Salaries of Public School Teachers to P25, 000 and Non-Teaching Personnel to P15, 000. Per the records of the House of Representatives Journal Service, 118 signed as co-author of House Bill 245 as of June 29, 2014. Senators Angara, Trillanes and Marcos already have pending bills in the senate. Recently, Senators Osmeña, Poe and Legarda filed a counterpart bill in the Senate for House Bill 245.

Our campaign for just compensation has just begun. To achieve our purpose, we need to prepare well for our next actions. We need to sustain our momentum to garner more support from our fellow teachers and non-teaching personnel, administrators, parents (PTA), students and other sectors.

In line with this, we are extending our invitation to all the teachers in Region 7 to join our upcoming Free WALK for Teachers' Salary Increase this August 21, 2014, assembly time at 8 a.m. in front of Abellana National School. A parade will start at 8:15 a.m. towards the Fuente Osmeña Circle. The program will end at 9:00 a.m.

The objective of this Free WALK for Teachers' Salary Increase is to show support for House Bill 245 or the Salary Upgrading Bill for Public School Teachers which is currently pending in the House of Representatives.

Hence, we are also requesting your good office to endorse this meaningful activity by issuing a memorandum encouraging the participation of teachers.

Moreover, we invite your office to witness our activity and program, and give a solidarity message for the teachers.

Thank you and more power.

Para sa Guro at Bayan,

ANTONIA MAAMO-LIM
Abellana National School
Regional President, ACT-Region 7 Union
Contact No. 0925 5816 39



Antonio L. Tinio

Party-List Representative, ACT Teachers

House Bill 245
AN ACT

**INCREASING THE MINIMUM MONTHLY SALARIES
OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS TO TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND PESOS
AND NON-TEACHING PERSONNEL TO FIFTEEN THOUSAND PESOS**

SECTION 3. Raising of the Minimum Salaries of Public School Teachers. The present minimum salaries of public school teachers in elementary and secondary schools shall be raised from P18,549 to P25,000 a month. The salaries of those occupying higher positions shall be adjusted accordingly.

SECTION 4. Raising of the Minimum Salaries of Non-Teaching Personnel. The present minimum salaries of non-teaching personnel in the elementary and secondary schools shall be raised from P9,000 to P15,000 a month. The salaries of those occupying higher positions shall be adjusted accordingly.

From the Explanatory Note:

"The current pay scheme of government fails to fulfill [the criteria for salaries set by the *Magna Carta for Public School Teachers*]. Salaries of public school teachers do not compare favorably with other occupations in government. A duly licensed professional teacher occupying the entry-level position of Teacher I earns P18,549 a month (Salary



Grade 11, Step 1), substantially less than a high school graduate who enters the Philippine Military Academy as a cadet who has a monthly salary of P21,709.

"Neither does teachers' pay compare favorably with those employed as call center agents. The salary for call center employment, which requires neither formal education nor bachelor's degree, ranges from P15,000 to P25,000 a month.

x x x

"Appalling economic conditions also overwhelm non-teaching personnel, who perform functions complementary to teachers' duties inside the classroom. As with other low- and middle-level government employees, they are also battered with indecently low pay, receiving a salary of P9,000 per month at the least (Salary Grade 1, Step 1), which is lower than the minimum wage in the National Capital Region. This is regardless of protections accorded to them by law and international instruments, chief of which are the rights to just and favorable conditions of work and to living and decent wage (Article 23 (1) and (3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 7 (a) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).

"Efforts of the government to upgrade the educational system cannot succeed as long as teachers and education workers are not accorded decent salaries."

House Bill 246
AN ACT

**UPGRADING THE MINIMUM SALARY GRADE
OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING PERSONNEL
FROM SALARY GRADE 12 TO 16**

SECTION 3. Raising of the Minimum Salary Grade Level. The present minimum salary grade level of Instructor I in public universities and colleges shall be upgraded from Salary Grade 12 to Salary Grade 16. Salary grade levels of all other teaching personnel occupying higher positions shall be adjusted accordingly.

From the Explanatory Note:

"This bill...is in line with the state policies of accordng priority to education (Section 17 of Article II, 1987 Constitution) and upholding the right of all citizens to accessible quality education at all levels (Section 1 of Article XIV). This also gives life to the Constitutional mandate to the State to enhance the right of all teachers to professional advancement (Section 5(4) of Article XIV) and ensure that teaching will attract and retain its rightful share of the best available talents through adequate remuneration (Section 5(5) of Article XIV).

"This bill is also filed to address the huge gaps between the salaries of instructors and professors in SUCs and LUCs and those of persons in comparable occupations or with similar qualifications here and abroad.

X X X

"Furthermore, in accordance with the equal protection clause of the Constitution and the principle of equal pay for equal work, teaching personnel in SUCs and LUCs, who generally share similar teaching loads and working conditions, shall be paid based on the same salary scale and schedule.

House Bill 247

AN ACT

INCREASING THE ALLOWANCE OF PERSONAL EXEMPTION FOR INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYERS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 35 (A) AND (B) OF REPUBLIC ACT 8424, OR THE TAX REFORM ACT OF 1997, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT 9504

From the Explanatory Note:

"Personal exemptions are the theoretical personal, living, and family expenses of an individual...These are arbitrary amounts which have been calculated by our lawmakers to be roughly equivalent to the minimum of subsistence, taking into account the personal status and additional qualified dependents of the taxpayer

X X X

"This bill aims to increase the basic personal [exemptions to P75,000 for each individual taxpayer] and additional exemptions [to P40,000 for each dependent not exceeding four], and to give the Commissioner of Internal Revenue the duty to annually review these exemptions in relation to current living costs and recommend necessary adjustments to Congress. It proposes the restoration of the exemptions to the 2008 levels, thereby easing the income tax burden on ordinary working people. This proposal will allow the lowest-paid government employee to take home a non-taxable income of at least 69% of his or her annual pay. The middle-level government employee and the minimum wage earner will be assured of 34% and 53% of their incomes, respectively."

House Bill 248

AN ACT

INCREASING THE CEILING FOR THE TOTAL EXCLUSION FROM GROSS INCOME OF 13TH MONTH PAY AND OTHER BENEFITS TO SIXTY THOUSAND PESOS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 32 (B)(7)(E) OF THE NATIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE

SECTION 1. Section 32 (B)(7)(e) of the National Internal Revenue Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Section 32 (B) *Exclusions from Gross Income.* — The following items shall not be included in gross income and shall be exempt from taxation under this title:

X X X

"(e) *13th Month Pay and Other Benefits.* — Gross benefits received by officials and employees of public and private entities: Provided, however, That the total exclusion under this paragraph shall not exceed [Thirty Thousand Pesos (P30,000)] **SIXTY THOUSAND PESOS (P60,000)** which shall cover:

X X X

"(iv) Other benefits such as productivity incentives and Christmas bonus: *Provided, further,* That the ceiling of [Thirty thousand Pesos (P30,000)] **SIXTY THOUSAND PESOS**

(P60,000) [may] SHALL be increased through rules and regulations issued by the Secretary of Finance, upon **ANNUAL REVIEW AND** recommendation of the Commissioner **AND UPON CONSULTATION WITH THE LABOR SECTOR IN THE PRIVATE AND CIVIL SERVICE**, after considering among others, the effect on the same of the inflation rate at the end of the taxable year.”

House Bill 249

**AN ACT FURTHER STRENGTHENING
THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM**

From the Explanatory Note:

“This measure seeks to revise the *Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) Act* (Republic Act No. 8291, as amended). This was House Bill 6904 from the Fifteenth Congress, approved on Third Reading by the House of Representatives in plenary on 5 June 2013 after a series of public hearings and consultations. It seeks to address some of the long-running concerns of GSIS members, many of whom suffered from years of mismanagement, poor record-keeping, irregular remittances, inefficient collection, lack of transparency, and outright abuse and corruption on the part of GSIS and the government agencies who are jointly responsible for maintaining and ensuring the continuing viability of the state pension fund.

“In particular, this bill aims to strengthen the existing law by **improving members’ benefits and institutionalizing members’ rights and responsibilities of agency employers**, thus making regular remittance of premiums, reconciliation of records, and prompt processing of claims duly demandable and actionable rights. The **penalty for responsible personnel of agency employers who fail to remit to the GSIS premium payments already deducted from the members is also increased**, from a penalty from mere *estafa* under the current law to imprisonment from 12 years and one day to 20 years and a fine of Five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000) to Two million pesos (P2,000,000), plus absolute perpetual disqualification

from holding public office. Where the offense is likewise attributable to heads of agencies, the penalty is higher.

“Another improvement in this bill is the use of the total length of service as basis for the determination of a member’s eligibility to receive benefits and the computation of the amounts thereof.

“Salient provisions include:

“1. institutionalization of members’ rights.

“2. Broader representation in the Board of Trustees of actual members, with the addition of a Trustee from a leading teaching or non-teaching organization accredited by the CSC, another two coming from leading organizations of government employees including those in local government units (LGUs), and one to represent retirees.

“3. Increased criminal and civil liabilities for erring officials/employees with regard to the deduction and remittance of premium payments of members.

“4. Deletion of the qualifier “dependent for support upon member of pensioner” for beneficiaries under the survivorship benefit.

“5. Provision of an option to unmarried members to designate a beneficiary in the absence of parents or children.”

House Bill 250

**AN ACT
INCREASING THE PERSONNEL ECONOMIC RELIEF ALLOWANCE
GRANTED TO GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES TO FOUR THOUSAND
PESOS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

From the Explanatory Note:

“The Personnel Economic Relief Allowance (PERA) was first granted to government employees in 1991, in the amount of P500 per month. Joint Resolution 4, issued by the House of Representatives

and the Senate on 17 June 2009, mandated that the P1,500 Additional Compensation and the P500 PERA, with a combined total of P2,000, shall thenceforth be collectively referred to as PERA.

"The PERA is granted monthly to all public sector employees, whether paid on salary, wage, or base pay basis, across all agencies. This benefit is considered as a supplement to the basic compensation of government employees due to the rising cost of living.

"An increase in the PERA will offer government personnel more substantial relief from the erosion of purchasing power of public sector salaries and wages. For this purpose, this bill proposes that the PERA be increased to P4,000."

House Bill 251

AN ACT

**PROVIDING FOR A TEACHING SUPPLIES ALLOWANCE
FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

From the Explanatory Note:

"Public school teachers are among the lowest paid professionals in our society. In spite of this, they are often forced to pay for everyday classroom supplies out of their own pockets.

"Traditionally, the government provides classroom teachers with an annual allowance for classroom supplies, popularly known as a 'chalk allowance'. In the Department of Education budget for 2011, this cash allowance amounted to P 700 per teacher per school year, or P 3.50 per school day (given 203 school days for SY 2010-2011). Beginning 2012, this allowance was raised to P 1,000 per teacher per school year, or P 4.98 per school day (given an average of 201 school days since SY 2011-2012). Such a meager amount is not enough to cover the costs not only of chalk, but also of other supplies such as erasers, pens, pencils, notebooks, class records, manila paper, cartolina, bond paper, art paper, and others, that are essential for the daily functioning of teaching and learning in the class-

room. With the imposition of the insufficiently funded K to 12 Program, schools were not given enough number of copies of teachers' guides and learners' materials to be used in the grade levels adopting the new curriculum (Kindergarten and Grades 1 and 7 in SY 2011-2012 and Grades 2 and 8 in SY 2012-2013).

"Hence, teachers must draw from their own finances to pay for these materials which, in the first place, should be provided by the government.

"This bill proposes to increase the annual allowance for classroom supplies from P 1,000 to P 2,000 (or P 9.85 per day), thereby relieving teachers of this onerous financial burden."

House Bill 441

AN ACT

**GRANTING FREE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION
IN STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND PUBLIC TECHNICAL
AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN
OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS**

From the Explanatory Note:

"This bill seeks to meet the avowed policy of the *Magna Carta* by uplifting the economic condition of teachers, through the provision of a non-wage benefit in the form of free tuition and other fees for their dependent children who are admitted to public post-secondary education institutions [one dependent per teacher]. By shouldering this cost, the government shall provide substantial economic relief for teachers, give due recognition for their dedication and hard work, and enhance the status of the teaching profession. A similar intention is behind the comparable benefit given to barangay officials since 1991 in the *Local Government Code* (Republic Act 7160), but the coverage mandated in this bill is broader in that it provides free education in not only state universities and colleges but also public technical and vocational schools."

House Bill 442
AN ACT
PROHIBITING THE HIRING OF TEACHERS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR
THROUGH CONTRACTS OF SERVICE OR JOB ORDERS

SECTION 2. Coverage. This Act shall apply to teachers employed in public schools in the kindergarten, elementary, and secondary levels, as well as in public post-secondary education institutions, including State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs), and technical-vocational schools.

SECTION 3. Prohibition. No teacher shall be hired to carry out the duties and functions of regular teaching staff, either on a full-time or part-time basis, through contracts of service or job orders, *Provided*, that post-secondary education institutions requiring teachers with highly specialized or technical expertise, which cannot be provided by their regular teaching staff, are exempt from the prohibition on contracts of service.

SECTION 4. Administrative Liability. Any government official or employee who violates the previous section shall be dismissed from the service with cancellation of eligibility, forfeiture of retirement benefits, and the perpetual disqualification for reemployment in the government service.

From the Explanatory Note:

"Having no employer-employee relationship with the institutions that hired them, teachers on contracts of service or job orders experience exploitative and discriminatory compensation, benefits, and working conditions. Although possessing the same qualifications as their regularly-employed counterparts, they receive lower pay, enjoy none of the benefits, have no job security, and are deprived of their right to unionize...They are also denied benefits such as Personnel Economic Relief Allowance (PERA), Cost of Living Allowance (COLA), Representation and Transportation Allowance (RATA), mid-year bonus, productivity incentive, Christmas bonus and cash gifts, and the social security coverage provided by the

Government Service Insurance System and PhilHealth. Having no security of tenure, they are often rehired on the same terms, year in and year out.

"Hiring teachers through contracts of service or job orders is contrary to Article XIV, Section 5(5) of the 1987 Constitution ("the State shall...ensure that teaching will attract and retain its rightful share of the best available talents through adequate remuneration and other means of job satisfaction and fulfillment") and existing laws, including Republic Act 4670 (*The Magna Carta of Public School Teachers*) that are intended to protect the status of the teaching profession."

House Bill 443
AN ACT
REGULATING CLASS SIZE IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
AND APPOINTING FUNDS THEREFOR

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. It is the declared policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education. It is likewise declared that the State shall provide just compensation and humane working conditions for public school teachers.

Oversized classes in the country's public schools adversely affect the learning experience provided to Filipino schoolchildren. To ensure access to quality education, it is necessary to establish standards for class size.

For their part, teachers are entitled to protection from unregulated increases in class size as well as to compensation commensurate to their actual workload.

SECTION 4. Standard Class Size. Each class to be handled by a single teacher shall have a standard size of 35 students. For purposes of this Act, any class with not more than 35 students shall be considered a standard class.

SECTION 5. Large Class Size. Any class exceeding 35 students up to a maximum of 50 students shall be considered a large class. In no case shall a class size in excess of 50 students be permitted.

SECTION 6. Large Class Honorarium. A teacher handling a large class shall be entitled to a large class honorarium equivalent to one percent (1.0%) of her daily rate for every student in excess of the standard class size of 35.

This formula shall apply to all classes assigned to the teacher during the school year.

House Bill 444
AN ACT

**AMENDING SECTION 13 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6646,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE ELECTORAL REFORMS LAW OF
1987," MAKING ELECTION SERVICE VOLUNTARY FOR PUBLIC
SCHOOL TEACHERS AND OTHER CITIZENS**

From the Explanatory Note:

"Section 13 of Republic Act 6646, known as the *Electoral Reforms Law of 1987*, mandates that public school teachers comprise the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI). Historically, they have acquitted themselves well in carrying out their election responsibilities. Time and again, the success of national and local elections are rightfully attributed to the competence and hard work of teachers. All too often, teachers on election duty have made personal sacrifices over and above the call of duty.

x x x

"Mandatory election duty has long been an additional burden borne by public school teachers, who are already hard-pressed to provide quality education to our youth, in the face of low pay and difficult working conditions. In order to alleviate their plight,

teachers must be given the freedom to choose whether or not they want to fulfil the roles of the BEI.

"Elections are fundamental to a democratic country. Election service is an essential civic duty that should be made available to all concerned citizens. The appointment of BEIs from among the ranks of motivated, civic-minded volunteers will provide greater opportunities for people's participation in elections."

House Bill 445
AN ACT

**DECLARING OCTOBER 5 OF EVERY YEAR
AS "NATIONAL TEACHERS' DAY"**

From the Explanatory Note:

"World Teachers' Day was inaugurated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1994 to commemorate the signing on October 5, 1966 of the Joint UNESCO-International Labor Organization *Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers*, a landmark document that sought to establish international standards to promote and protect the teaching profession.

"The *Recommendation* served as the basis for the enactment of Republic Act No. 4670, the *Magna Carta for Public School Teachers*, in 1966. More than 100 countries now celebrate World Teachers' Day.

"In the Philippines, teachers are among the most ravaged by the worsening economic crisis. Overworked and underpaid, many of these noble professionals are compelled by hard times to turn to foreign shores for much better pay.

"Despite hardships attendant to their profession, such as low pay and meager benefits, difficult working conditions, and minimal protection during election and census duties, our teachers still carry

on, molding the minds and hearts of our country's future. This bill sets aside October 5 as a special working holiday in their honor, to enable the public to express recognition and gratitude for their sacrifices."

House Bill 446

AN ACT

**AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT 10175, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
"CYBERCRIME PREVENTION ACT OF 2012"**

From the Explanatory Note:

"This bill proposes to remove from our statute books provisions of Republic Act 10175, or the *Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012*, which endanger fundamental freedoms, particularly the right to free speech.

"First is the insertion of libel, a crime defined by Article 355 of the *Revised Penal Code* (Act No. 3815, 8 December 1930). Due to the widely spreading view that it shackles free expression and press, the trend internationally is the decriminalization of libel. The Philippine Congress, however, reinforced the antiquated felony with a graver penalty. x x x

"Next are Sections 6 and 7. The first provision qualifies as a graver crime any act penalized by the RPC or any special law, assigning to it a penalty one degree higher than that provided for by the RPC or the special law. However, persons committing crimes by, through, and with the use of information and communications technologies have not been established to have a greater criminal intent, warranting the higher penalty. Worse, the accused will be subjected to double jeopardy x x x.

"Last is Section 19 is a censorship clause, which allows the Justice Secretary to restrict or block access to computer data such as a website or account upon mere *prima facie* evidence of cyber-libel or any other violation of RA 10175. This violates the rights to free

expression and due process guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. A mere executive official—not a judge—is empowered to take away one's access to his or her computer data upon a passing examination.

"This bill also seeks to amend Section 12 which authorizes real-time collection by law enforcement authorities of traffic data without a court warrant. This is an unreasonable seizure of personal information such as one's address, phone number, and bank account numbers, and an unacceptable intrusion into privacy of communication highly proscribed by the Constitution. Such great power over the said rights of the people requires the authority of the courts.

"These contentious provisions of RA 10175 cast a chilling effect over the exercise of free online expression. They bring back the days of Martial Law when being critical, especially of public officials, is a crime and arbitrary law enforcement is the general rule rather than the exception. For any repressive state official or regime, no actual prosecution under RA 10175 is necessary. Just the threat of prosecution is enough to curtail criticism, analysis, even simple thought. The slightest hint of dissent would trigger the suppression of free speech and an invasion of privacy."

House Bill 447

AN ACT

**AMENDING SECTION 8 OF REPUBLIC ACT 6426,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "FOREIGN CURRENCY DEPOSIT ACT
OF THE PHILIPPINES"**

From the Explanatory Note:

"[R]ecent events have shown how the absolute and unqualified secrecy of foreign currency deposits, and their exemption from government orders or processes, may be exploited to cloak financial transactions by individuals and entities involved in illegal activities. For instance, government officials, including those conferred with immunity from suit during their incumbency and removable only

through impeachment, may make use of foreign currency deposits to amass ill-gotten wealth with the assurance that these will be virtually beyond the reach of the State.

"This bill proposes amendments to Republic Act 6426, or the *Foreign Currency Deposit Act of the Philippines*, that, while maintaining the secrecy and confidentiality of foreign currency deposits, allows their examination in certain exceptional cases, such as impeachment, or upon the order of a competent court. In addition, it proposes that their exemption from governmental orders or processes be removed. If this bill is enacted into law, foreign currency deposits will, in these respects, enjoy the same level of protection as deposits in the national currency."

House Bill 448

AN ACT

**DECLARING FEBRUARY FOUR OF EVERY YEAR
AS "PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN WAR DAY"**

From the Explanatory Note:

"Sadly, February 4 passes yearly with hardly an official acknowledgment of the Philippine-American War and its tremendous significance in our history. Any memory of the events, heroes, and martyrs of the war has nearly been obliterated from the collective consciousness of our people. This bill thus seeks to declare February 4 as a special working holiday to honor the memory of our ancestors, the men and women who fought in the face of overwhelming odds and gave up their lives to defend the ideal of a truly independent and sovereign Philippines. Their sacrifice had been indispensable in the forging of the modern Filipino nation, and every Filipino citizen owes them a debt of gratitude.

"National commemoration of the Philippine-American War through the remembrance of the patriotism and self-sacrifice of its heroes and martyrs will reconcile us with our past, clarify our present, and point the way to our future."

House Bill 449

AN ACT

**WITHHOLDING OPERATIONAL FUNDS OF UNITS OF THE ARMED
FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES IMPLICATED IN GROSS HUMAN
RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**

From the Explanatory Note:

"Notwithstanding the Aquino administration's promises to address the deteriorating human rights situation in the country, the climate of impunity still reigns. Extrajudicial killings and other gross human rights violations involving state security forces continue to take place. According to KARAPATAN and the End Impunity Alliance, there have been 137 victims of extrajudicial executions, 14 victims of enforced disappearances, 72 of torture, and 269 of illegal arrests since President Benigno Aquino III came to power in June 2010, with the rise of incidents of violations "emanat[ing] from the state policy to muzzle principled dissent and the exercise of our rights, as embodied in the operational plans of the government" (*Statement of the End Impunity Alliance*, 25 April 2013). x x x Meanwhile, only a few military personnel have been criminally charged for human rights violations, and not a single perpetrator has been convicted. "The Butcher," retired Army general Jovito Palparan, continues to remain at large years after kidnapping charges were filed against him in court.

x x x

"This bill will encourage the AFP chain of command to ensure that their units uphold and respect human rights at all times in the discharge of their duties, especially during counterinsurgency operations. Furthermore, it will incentivize AFP commanders to promptly identify perpetrators and make sure that the proper charges are filed. It also underscores the responsibility of the Secretary of National Defense in ensuring that charges are filed against individual perpetrators. For its part, the Commission on Human Rights is given the role of vetting complaints and weeding out spurious allegations."

House Bill 450
AN ACT

DECLARING FILIPINO SIGN LANGUAGE AS THE NATIONAL SIGN LANGUAGE OF THE FILIPINO DEAF AND THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF GOVERNMENT IN ALL TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING THE DEAF, AND MANDATING ITS USE IN SCHOOLS, BROADCAST MEDIA, AND WORKPLACES

From the Explanatory Note:

"Deaf children break the barriers to communication by learning language through a natural sign language in formal education. Filipino Sign Language (FSL), a natural sign language indigenous to the Filipino Deaf community, has its own grammar and linguistic structure. FSL is learned without effort from interactions of Filipino Deaf children with other Deaf children and the Deaf community. Research shows that exposure to native users of FSL facilitates the learning of the Filipino Deaf: they develop language and acquire conversational skills easily. Deaf children are proven to have increased chances of developing self-esteem and higher competencies for college and employment if the primary medium of instruction is their first language (a visual language), which can then be used as a bridge to other languages.

"However, Philippine schools at the primary and secondary levels have mainly used the Signing in Exact English (SEE) and/or Sign Supported Speech, which are artificial sign systems based on oral and written English. x x x

"The Filipino Deaf community strongly believes that this current practice is inconsistent with previous issuances of the Department and a major violation of the rights of Deaf persons under the 1987 Constitution and international instruments, mainly the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [under which] the Philippine government is obliged to facilitate the learning of the official sign language, promote the linguistic and cultural identity of the Deaf community, and ensure that Deaf education is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication.

x x x

"This proposed measure seeks to realize the rights of the Filipino Deaf to full and equal participation in society by enabling the acquisition of life and social development skills through the use of FSL as the language of instruction, in an environment which respects their identity and distinct capabilities. It also seeks to ensure that all executive policies are consistent with the law as above stated. Furthermore, with its directive to all government agencies to ensure the Filipino Deaf access to all public transactions, services, and facilities through the use of FSL as the medium of official communication, this bill seeks to give effect to the State's obligations under international law to progressively realize the rights of the Filipino Deaf to inclusion, accessibility, expression, and access to justice x x x."

House Bill 1535

AN ACT

**ABOLISHING THE "PORK BARREL" SYSTEM
BY PROHIBITING THE ALLOCATION
AND USE OF FUNDS FOR SUCH PURPOSE**

From the Explanatory Note:

Pork barrel funds have long been recognized as a massive source of graft and corruption. Kickbacks (the so-called "S.O.P") are seen as the cost of doing politics as usual. It is the pork barrel system that enables the patronage politics pervading all levels of government, from the barangays to Malacañang. The Aquino administration has proven itself to be no less adept than its predecessor at making use of PDAF and other lump sum funds as a tool for imposing its will on Congress, reducing its role to a mere rubberstamp on many issues.

Severe limitations in validation and auditing, as well as the scope and number of projects involved, have always prevented a thorough and nationwide check of the use of legislative and Presidential pork barrel funds. x x x

In short, the pork barrel system is a form of institutionalized patronage and officially tolerated graft and corruption. Contrary to claims by other legislators that more and better safeguards can be implemented to prevent abuse, the current scam proves that the pork barrel system is beyond salvaging and should be abolished.

We have consistently stood for the abolition of PDAF and the whole pork barrel system, even as we recognized that, up to this point, such a position would make little headway in Congress. However, we are confident that the righteous public outrage generated by the sheer magnitude of the plunder allegedly perpetrated through this P10 billion pork barrel scam will provide the momentum needed to move this issue forward.

This bill aims to abolish the pork barrel system by prohibiting the President from providing a budgetary item or including in the proposed budget submitted to Congress every fiscal year any lump sum allocations to the PDAF and similar lump sum, discretionary funds. Aside from the legislators' pork barrel, the bill shall also abolish the President's pork barrel funds, such as the President's Social Fund and the Malamapaya Fund.

**EXCERPTS FROM
PROPOSED LAWS
FOR THE BENEFIT**

**OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS
FILED IN THE 16TH CONGRESS
BY REP. ANTONIO L. TINIO,
ACT TEACHERS PARTY-LIST REPRESENTATIVE**

