



House Journal Second Special Session, 2007

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Third Day

April 23, 2007

The House of Representatives of the Fifteenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its Second Day, Second Special Session on Monday, April 23, 2007, at 1:15 p.m. in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Honorable Oscar M. Babauta, Speaker of the House, presided.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

Speaker Babauta: Before we move on, on behalf of the members of the House, I would like to welcome the audience who are in the gallery. Present with us this afternoon are, Mayor Tudela, and also we have former colleague, Congressman Ike Demapan, and of course the family of our dear brother, the late Conrad Sablan Reyes.

The Clerk called the roll and seventeen members were present.

Speaker Babauta: Clerk take note that Representatives Ada and Torres will be coming in late. Representatives Taman and Yumul are duly excused for today's session. Before we move on the official business of the House, I would recognize the motion to dissolve into the Committee of the Whole to present a Resolution to the family of the late Conrad Sablan Reyes. We also have a guest that would brief us at least for thirty minutes with respect to alternative energy primarily windmill.

Floor Leader Florencio T. Deleon Guerrero moved to resolve into the Committee of the Whole for the presentation of a resolution; was seconded and carried by voice vote.

Speaker Babauta: The motion is carried.

The House went into Committee of the Whole at 1:17 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The House returned to plenary session at 2:27 p.m.

Speaker Babauta: We are back to our plenary session. I recognize Representative Yumul.

Rep. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to let the record reflect that I am present.

Speaker Babauta: It has been reflected, and so as Representative Torres.

ADOPTION OF JOURNALS

None

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

None

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

None

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

GOV. COMM. 15-228: (4/19/07) Informing the House that he signed into law H. B. NO. 15-208 (To delete vocational rehabilitation as a duty of the Department of Public Health). [Became **Public Law No. 15-53**].

There was no discussion.

SENATE COMMUNICATIONS

None

HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS

HSE. COMM. NO. 15-29: Letter to the Executive Director of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation.

The Chair recognized the Minority Leader.

Rep. Palacios: Mr. Speaker, we have a letter to the Executive Director of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation that was shared by the Chairman of PUTC. I wholeheartedly support this idea of having an internal audit unit within CUC. The letter is self explanatory. We read in the paper that the \$4.5 Million dollar reprogramming request by the Governor to fund rehabilitation of the Saipan Power Plant has been recently approved by OIA, if I am not mistaken. I think it has been approved and I would like to request that our good Chairman immediately find out the status of the rehabilitation project now that we have the approval from OIA to fund that project. I would like to get more information whether that project is still on line in light of the privatization efforts, whether that project is going to take another 3 to 9 months just to get an RFP out. We know that the power plant is in fairly bad state of disrepair. Some of our members have attested their reports through various onsite visits. At the very least, Mr. Speaker, I would like to request our Chairman to ask CUC for a cost summary of the plant rehabilitation. We need to make sure that this project is done expeditiously, and with no problems. I hope that CUC would have the...to ensure that the power plant rehabilitation project goes as smoothly as possible, and the tendering or the bidding procedure to do this repair is done in most efficient manner. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: Chairman Dela Cruz, take note. You may seek audience with the top management of CUC, and I recommend that you also consult with the CUC and the Administration's Privatization Task Force. As I understand – I am not too privy with the details though, but I understand that it would be done simultaneously with the repairing of the power plant, and at the same time, continue on with the RFP, but if you could get those information and hopefully make it available – or get a basic information so that the members would have the available information on our next session.

Rep. Dela Cruz: So noted, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair recognized Chairwoman Kaipat.

Rep. Kaipat: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I am not out of order, I would like to address this to the author of this letter. I am looking at the third paragraph, and I have not read the whole letter yet, but the third line where it says, I commend OPA for its vigilance, I could not help but believe that CUC could be better served by its own independent internal audit unit that is properly restructured, adequately resourced, and professionally capable to conduct internal audit work importance with established professional standards. This is merely establishing and strengthening what is there and what is not there, not necessarily saying obviously replacing the necessary external audit by OPA, right?

Rep. Dela Cruz: Thank you. Yes, the request to have an internal audit unit within CUC does not take away the function of an external auditing. What this merely does is CUC would have to have this unit up within CUC to more or less monitor any type of – whether it be conduct or any type of SOP that needs to be administered. This will basically be a unit that would try and alleviate any future auditing work that might come up. So basically, it is getting...out before they get out of hand.

Rep. Kaipat: Thank you.

The Chair recognized Representative Tenorio.

Rep. Tenorio: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for clarification...on the CUC Board of Directors – are they already – have they all been appointed, complete, or...

The Chair recognized Chairman Dela Cruz.

Rep. Dela Cruz: As of this time, there is no official Board for CUC. What I do understand is that they have a Special Advisory Board, and I have not been privy to names of those Special Advisory Board.

Speaker Babauta: Let me clarify this from Representative Tenorio...is it the CUC Board that you are trying to find out or the new creation of the new creation of PUC?

Rep. Tenorio: My concern is that in the absence of a complete board, and you have major decisions to make, who does or who actually make those decision? Is it the Governor or his Advisor, or what?

Rep. Torres: Privilege.

Speaker Babauta: Let me just try to answer, Representative Tenorio.

Rep. Torres: I know the answer.

Speaker Babauta: Then I will yield to Representative Torres to answer. You may proceed, Representative Torres.

Rep. Torres: There is no board, and no advisory board...the board itself is the Governor or the Lieutenant Governor. That is it. I challenge anybody in this room that what I said is not true. Pamela Mathis, maybe, but...

Speaker Babauta: This is for that reason that I continue to ask Chairman Dela Cruz to expedite, because the CNMI is taking a major undertaking with respect to the operations of the utility, and I ask Chairman Dela Cruz to expedite the confirmation or rather hearing and confirmation on those nominees so that we can have our Public Utilities Commission established. I also recommend to our Chairman if he can seek a dialogue with his counterpart in the Senate so we do this simultaneously instead of having a piecemeal hearing. That would be a lot faster. You may continue, Representative Tenorio.

Rep. Tenorio: You know, I am very concerned, Mr. Speaker, because I do not know where we are heading with the PUC, and obviously, our biggest problem here is power, and we have people out there screaming and raising hell. I do not know what needs to be done to expedite this, Mr. Speaker, but we should have a complete board for PUC and an Advisory Board as it may for CUC people because somebody will be making responsible decision. The House is not fully apprised of what is going on. I think it behooves us, Mr. Speaker, to do what is necessary to speed up...

Speaker Babauta: The Chairman has received several nominees or rather names that were submitted by the Administration nominating individuals to the Commission. So I am sure that the Chairman is very much aware of his deliberation on those nominees. I continue to talk to him and communicate with him with respect to those nominees. I recognize the Minority Leader.

Rep. Palacios: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since I am requesting, I would like to add on to that request to ask CUC if they could give us a copy of the Delgado's report on privatization. Here we are privatization the most essential public infrastructure of the Commonwealth, and we as elected leaders are not even accorded with a report to see how this privatization issue is preceding. You know, we are held responsible. CUC may have its Board of Directors, but the...must stop here. We should at least have some of the most basic knowledge on how this issue is preceding. To date, we have not been able to get even a draft report. So I think our PUTC Committee should pursue this report, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: Take note, Chairman Dela Cruz. I recognize Representative Kaipat.

Rep. Kaipat: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, the Administration send over their nominations for the PUC Board, and if I may just request a status of that from our good Chairman of PUTC to find out where we stand on that. I stand ready and willing at any time to get together and

work on the nominations. I think that the suggestion to invite the Senate to work together on this just so we can expedite this matter is an excellent one. We should pursue that. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Chairman Dela Cruz.

Rep. Dela Cruz: Basically, as it stands right now, there have been five nominees. Mr. Allen Perez, Ms. Lina Villagomez, Mr. Manny Rabauliman, Ms. Velma Palacios, and Mr. Chris Inos. Presently, I have only received information for Mr. Perez, Ms. Villagomez, and Mr. Rabauliman. I believe on the last session, Congressman Torres had brought up the issue of not only looking at a drug test receipt, but the actual result of the test. So far these three individuals that have submitted their bio's and other information have only submitted their drug test receipts. There are no drug test results so I am awaiting that information. As per, Ms. Palacios, I have spoken with our legal counsel, and I am having look at Public Law 15-35, which is the PUC Bill. I believe, Ms. Palacios is employed by PTI, and there is no way that we can have somebody conflicting with the Commission itself. Mr. Inos, for his part, I have not received any information coming from the Administration. So that is basically the statuses of the nominees right now. Until such time that I receive a drug test result, I would be calling a meeting with the Committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Babauta: I would recommend to you, Mr. Chairman that you meet with your Committee, and address the hearing process sooner than later, other than awaiting for a drug test result, and hopefully that by the time those necessary information get to the Committee, a decision of the Committee would be made whether or not to confirm them or not. In this case, try to start the Committee process and call these nominees who are already towards completing the required necessary paperwork that the Committee requires, once that is accomplished, the Committee can make a decision thoroughly.

Rep. Dela Cruz: I just feel, Mr. Speaker, that I will feel more comfortable when all the information has been submitted.

Speaker Babauta: Have you communicated that to the appointing authority, because the nominees are actually responsible for procuring those information for them to be confirmed.

Rep. Dela Cruz: I believe the Administration has the duties to pass that information over to the Legislature, but nevertheless, I will call the Administration to find out the pending information that we...

Speaker Babauta: I would suggest that you expedite matters on both sides so that we can move on. I appreciate it. Any more on item number 7? I recognize the Minority Leader.

Rep. Palacios: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the indulgence of the members if we can just have one more on this line item...

Speaker Babauta: Continue.

Rep. Palacios: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank you for responding to my inquiry regarding the 2008 Budget. I surely appreciate your written response. I made copies to pass out to the rest of the members.

Speaker Babauta: I think I did provide all the members of that letter.

Rep. Palacios: Thank you. Just one question on this though, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the Legal Counsel could – I know that the – I am not privy to all the specifics as to why the Administration requesting for an extension. Certainly with the situation that we are in with the fiscal and revenue base for the 2008 is probably very fluid. But let me ask this...does the Legislature have any authority to waive provisions of the Planning and Budgeting Act?

Speaker Babauta: Very good question, Counsel?

Legal Counsel Ian Catlett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer is no. There is one provision allowing an extended deadline – that is the first – right after the Governor's been elected. That is the only extension that is provided.

Rep. Palacios: So despite our understanding and willingness to cooperate in this issue, I want to be on record that we are not in the position to give any extension to the Governor. I think the unfortunate result of this is that now the Governor has no flexibility in terms of shifting funds to other agencies as the specific provision takes away his reprogramming authority not just of the Governor, but the Department head. So I hope that the department heads and the Governor do not reprogram after April 1st, because basically that would be an awful act. If I am not mistaken too, Representative Lizama just introduced – this bill became law, prohibits anyone from reprogramming funds without the authority, and that such reprogramming of anyone result in personal liability. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: That is the reason why many of these necessary positions that we are suppose to fill were put on hold. It has been sitting there for couple of weeks already, and I understand that it is because of that. As I mentioned in my letter to you, Minority Leader, that is one specific reason why the late submission is targeted for April 30th, and that is because of the Administration was assured by the actuarial individuals of our Trustees of our Northern Marianas Retirement Fund that the report would be due on the 30th of this month. So they are waiting for that information to basically balance the budget to the Legislature as a result of what would be the recent figures that would appear in record. I continue to prod and impress upon the Administration the importance of having to fulfill the mandate of our Constitution and our Statute as far as submitting a balance budget to the Legislature. This is very vital to each and every member of this House. That being said, we will move on back straight to item number 16. I would like to indulge and humbly request each and every member to...[End of Tape 1, Side A]

Speaker Babauta:...[Beginning of Tape 1, Side B]...if we can all cooperate. Floor Leader, I now recognize you for the first bill.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

None

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

None

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

None

BILL CALENDAR

Floor Leader Florencio Deleon Guerrero: So moved, Mr. Speaker, for the passage on First and Final Reading, S. B. No. 15-61, SD2.

The motion was seconded.

S. B. No. 15-61, SD2: A BILL FOR AN ACT TO CORRECT CERTAIN ERRORS AND INCONSISTENCIES IN THE PUBLIC LAWS OF THE COMMONWEALTH; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Speaker Babauta: This is a bill that both Houses passed and it was vetoed on the day of the State of Judiciary Address because of one conflicting amendment that was inadvertently not taken into consideration. So the Administration have sent their people to talk to us and the Senate...so immediately the Senate rectified this, and now accepting the correct version. Discussion on the motion. Clerk, call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to pass S. B. No. 15-61, SD2 on First and Final Reading:

Rep. Martin B. Ada	excused
Rep. Edwin P. Aldan	yes
Rep. Francisco S. Dela Cruz	yes
Rep. Florencio T. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Rep. Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Rep. Jacinta M. Kaipat	yes
Rep. Jesus SN. Lizama	yes
Rep. Crispin M. Ogo	yes
Rep. Arnold I. Palacios	yes
Rep. Justo S. Quitugua	yes
Rep. Benjamin B. Seman	yes
Rep. Candido B. Taman	excused
Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb	yes
Rep. Manuel A. Tenorio	yes
Rep. Stanley T. Torres	yes
Rep. Absalon V. Waki, Jr.	yes
Rep. Ray N. Yumul	yes
Rep. Oscar M. Babauta	yes

Speaker Babauta: With a vote of 16 “yes”, S. B. NO. 15-61, SD2 hereby passes the House on First and Final Reading. Floor Leader, next bill.

Floor Leader Florencio Deleon Guerrero: So moved, Mr. Speaker, for the passage on First and Final Reading, S. B. NO. 15-82.

The motion was seconded.

S. B. NO. 15-82: A BILL FOR AN ACT TO PROHIBIT THE NMI RETIREMENT FUND FROM PAYING LESS THAN THE FULL PENSION TO RETIREES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Speaker Babauta: Discussion on the motion. Ready. Clerk, call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to pass S. B. NO. 15-82 on First and Final Reading:

Rep. Martin B. Ada	excused
Rep. Edwin P. Aldan	yes
Rep. Francisco S. Dela Cruz	yes
Rep. Florencio T. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Rep. Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero	abstained
Rep. Jacinta M. Kaipat	abstained
Rep. Jesus SN. Lizama	yes
Rep. Crispin M. Ogo	yes
Rep. Arnold I. Palacios	absent during voting
Rep. Justo S. Quitugua	yes
Rep. Benjamin B. Seman	yes
Rep. Candido B. Taman	excused
Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb	no
Rep. Manuel A. Tenorio	abstained
Rep. Stanley T. Torres	yes
Rep. Absalon V. Waki, Jr.	no
Rep. Ray N. Yumul	yes
Rep. Oscar M. Babauta	yes

Speaker Babauta: By a vote 15 “yes”, S. B. NO. 15-82 hereby passes the House on First and Final Reading. Next bill, Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Florencio Deleon Guerrero: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So moved for the passage on First and Final Reading, H. B. NO. 15-240.

The motion was seconded.

H. B. NO. 15-240: A BILL FOR AN ACT TO AMEND THE JACKPOT TAX AND THE TAXATION OF OTHER WINNINGS BY AMENDING 4 CMC § 1505; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Speaker Babauta: Discussion. Clerk, call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to pass H. B. NO. 15-240 on First and Final Reading:

Rep. Martin B. Ada	excused
Rep. Edwin P. Aldan	no

Rep. Francisco S. Dela Cruz	yes
Rep. Florencio T. Deleon Guerrero	no
Rep. Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Rep. Jacinta M. Kaipat	yes
I vote “yes” with reservation because I am concern how we are going to enforce this.	
Rep. Jesus SN. Lizama	yes
Rep. Crispin M. Ogo	yes
Rep. Arnold I. Palacios	yes
Rep. Justo S. Quitugua	yes
Rep. Benjamin B. Seman	no
Rep. Candido B. Taman	excused
Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb	yes
Rep. Manuel A. Tenorio	no
Rep. Stanley T. Torres	abstained
Rep. Absalon V. Waki, Jr.	yes
Rep. Ray N. Yumul	yes
Mr. Speaker, was this bill – the author of the bill... this thing passed the last time, and it was just vetoed due to technicality?	
<u>Speaker Babauta</u> : Vice Speaker.	
<u>Vice Speaker Quitugua</u> : Mr. Speaker, it was vetoed due to the definition of operator, and now we have defined what is and who is the operator in the bill.	
<u>Rep. Yumul</u> : Just as a note, Mr. Speaker, to our colleague that asked a question.	
<u>Speaker Babauta</u> : The Vice Speaker assures you that the bill is okay.	
<u>Rep. Yumul</u> : The machine can actually be recalibrated to not pay out over a hundred dollars, so my vote is, “yes.”	
Rep. Oscar M. Babauta	yes

Speaker Babauta: By a vote of 11 “yes”, H. B. NO. 15-240 passes the House on First and Final Reading. Next bill, Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Florencio Deleon Guerrero: So moved, Mr. Speaker, for the passage on First and Final Reading, H. B. NO. 15-243.

The motion was seconded.

H. B. NO. 15-243: A BILL FOR AN ACT TO AMEND 4 CMC § 1204 TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF TAX IMPOSED BY 4 CMC §§ 1201 AND 1202, THE WAGE AND SALARIES AND EARNINGS TAXES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Speaker Babauta: Discussion, and I recognize Representative Tenorio.

Rep. Tenorio: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if we have debated this issue already, but I do not recall doing that in any of our session. I am just curious as to exactly how much increases or how much revenue do we expect by generating all these increases in taxes. I would like to ask the author to just briefly enlighten the members as to what we expect to get out of these increases. Some of these increases are substantial. Thank you.

The Chair recognized the Vice Speaker.

Vice Speaker Quitugua: Mr. Speaker, since we enacted our wage tax, the wage tax for earners from \$50,000 and over is only 9%, and with our government looking for revenues, every single penny counts. Every single penny that is turned into revenue really counts. So what this bill is trying to do

is tax an additional percent to wage earners who are earning \$60,001 to \$70,000 at 10%, and \$70,001 to \$80,000 at 11%, and \$80,001 to \$90,000 at 12%, and \$90,001 to \$100,000 at 13%, and over \$100,001 is 14%. Mr. Speaker, as to how much we generate, I am not so sure, but this is kind of making our tax system being fair because as it is now, the middle classes are actually carrying the burden, and the people at the lower ranking..., and the people who are earning more are actually not getting taxed the same as the middle class. So it is only to infuse some revenues into our government, and also to ask the higher earners to pay a little bit more into the coffer. If you look at the Federal Tax, Mr. Speaker, over \$100,000 is about 30%. So 14% actually is not really that much for people who are earning \$100,001 and over. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: You may continue, Representative Tenorio.

Rep. Tenorio: Thank you. Does it matter that you have 10 kids or 1 kid to pay 14% or 16% at a rate of \$100,000 or is there any reduction from the number of – even if it in a gradual increase?

Vice Speaker Quitugua: Mr. Speaker that is actually taken into consideration. That is why you fill in the W-4 Form to see how much tax that will be withheld, and when you file your tax, that is when you actually report in how many dependents you have and that will determine whether you are over withheld with your taxes or not.

Speaker Babauta: You still have the floor.

Rep. Tenorio: You know, we still have in the Senate H. B. NO. 15-196 to which it was amended by the House, and as far as fairness is concerned, I think that would be the way to do it, and I do not know what the Senate is doing at this time. One purpose of introducing that bill was to alleviate the sufferings of those poor people that have to pay 10% across the board, and it does not really matter whether you have 6 or 10 kids, you still pay 10% from your base salary. If this is a means to alleviate that, I would probably support it, but at the same time, Mr. Speaker, I heard the Governor mention many times that he would not support any form of taxes. I do not know, but maybe this is an uphill battle for all of us here, and we realize the fact that this government crippled and getting worst everyday. I am not really sure that this is the best way to address it. My question here, Mr. Speaker, goes back again at, what is the fiscal impact of this taxes if it can be – do we know what we are looking at whether we have a target? Or we are just taxing people because we need the money? I do not see any earmarking or anything here except that we are raising the tax.

Vice Speaker Quitugua: Mr. Speaker, there is no earmarking because whatever is collected goes to the General Fund. If we are going to earmark it then it is not going to help much the General Fund. Mr. Speaker, if you look at the situation anywhere in this world, if there is a financial problem in government, the first thing that the government does is look at the taxes. Either they raise it for a few years until the government sustains its normal revenue collection, or impose new kind of tax so that the government can collect revenues to continue providing services to the people. Nobody wants to increase taxes, Mr. Speaker. If this is the immediate solution that we need to do, I do not mind doing it, and I do not mind voting for it so long as we do not continue to hear or say that the revenues are going down and nothing is coming in; no additional revenue is coming in and we continue to furlough or ask our people to be taken off the payday roster because there is no more money for the government. Any other suggestions to bring revenues to this government, Mr. Speaker, is more than welcome, and one of our responsibilities here is to look at the declining

revenues, and come up with ways to enhance revenues. If the Administration is not coming up with ways to enhance revenues, it is our responsibility here in the Legislature to do something to enhance the revenues of the government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair recognized Representative Tenorio.

Rep. Tenorio: You know Vice Speaker, I am not against raising revenue for the government, but going back to my question, what are we raising or how much are we raising on this – does it make any difference whether we increase it by additional 5%? I mean, you are hitting at an unknown target. You say that the glass is empty, but you do not know how empty it is or how much you are going to fill it. So what are we looking at, because in most cases where this Legislature have to act almost instantly, is when we try to target taxes for certain special project because we can see the need right away. For instance, the \$6 Million for education, so we come up with a bill to address that, but we know that the government is in serious business, but how bad it is, and how much are we raising...I am merely asking for numbers. I am not saying that you are right or you are wrong. What are we looking at? What are we raising? If we increase the taxes from J to N, from 1% to 5%, what are we looking at in terms of revenue? Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: I can probably assume that the targeted bracket would be the Cabinet level, the Judges, the Executive Director's of the autonomous agencies...the present statute only limits up to \$50,000.00, and that is it, whether you are \$80,000 based salary employee, you still receive 9%. So I guess the Vice Speaker's Bill is to increase the threshold further to include all the way up to \$100,000.00.

Vice Speaker Quitugua: Mr. Speaker, actually when I was looking around how most employees can contribute to the financial problem of the government - those that are exempted – if you look at those that are exempted from the austerity are those who are earning over \$50,000.00. And if they cannot be part of the austerity measure, this is one way to make them be apart of contributing to the General Fund rather than relying on the middle earners and the lower earners to carry the government in this type of situation. Back to as to how much the impact of the taxes, I do not know because I do not know how many actually are earning \$60,000.00 and above, and how many are earning \$100,000.00 and above. But in spite of that, I think we need every penny that we can generate to put this government in a better situation, and also to try and prevent more of our people being laid off in the government due to the lack of revenue. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Chairwoman Kaipat.

Rep. Kaipat: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I commend the author's intention to basically even the playing field. However, I noticed that this bill was just filed on March 19th, which is not too long ago, and I do not recall that we really have had the chance to entertain this in the Committee to discuss it. For me, I need more education on this about the actual ramification of this. I know what I would like to see happen, but I am not sure that I am comfortable that this is the best way to go about it. If we do this right now, what are the consequences? Are we hurting ourselves in some other ways? I do share Representative Tenorio's concerns about this. There have been other suggestions about taxes, and other ways that we can try and cushion the impact, obviously we have agreed that the little guy is always the head first and hardest, and we all sympathize with that. But for my own comfort level, in order for me to vote in good conscience on this bill, I must be educated more on

this to know what it is that I am voting for and what I am supporting. So I just want to perhaps make a suggestion that we not take a final vote on this, and that we put in a Committee so we can call in whoever we need to call in just so we can discuss this. Let us bring in who we need to bring in to educate us so we can have a good healthy discussion on this. That would be my recommendation. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: Well, let me clarify the intent of this legislation. I do not want to be an advocate of this legislation myself, but you mentioned about taxing the little guys. In this case, the Vice Speaker's bill is taxing the big guys more than the small guys.

Rep. Kaipat: I am aware of that.

Speaker Babauta: Thank you.

Rep. Kaipat: I am aware of that.

The Chair recognized Chairman Waki.

Rep. Waki: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On that note that you were saying about taxing the big guys, without actually reviewing this more in detail in a Committee's kind of environment to find out what would be the impact – we do not know what the financial impact positive or negative, we do not know what the impact on those earning that wages what they would be thinking what would happen. This would where I thought when we did our rules, we said we would try to send as much to the Committee for review, and it is unfortunate, maybe sometimes some of these bills do not get reviewed on a timely basis, but we have bills that have committee reports that we had for months on the Calendar. I ask the indulgence of the Speaker as well as the Floor Leader that we look at these bills that have a committee report and we vote on those before we vote on something that was just introduced a week, two weeks or three weeks ago. It seems like we are constantly voting Senate Bills, looks like a particular author at all times, and I do not think that is what we should be doing. We should look at the merits of particular bills and the timeliness of them, and see if others have done their diligence to prepare the proper information so that when it is presented, we can have intelligent debates on the issue. Without any kind of committee report coming from at least certain amount of members, we are all going to sit here for hours like we have done many times over and over again on something we have almost no information about. Every time we debate for an hour or more on a particular subject, and we hold it off, and we recommend to put it through a committee, that is exactly what we should have done the first place. At this point in time, we are starting again to discuss something we have very little information about, and the pro's and con's, and the impacts negative or positive. We do not have enough information. If we pass something that becomes something that may be detrimental down the road, how can we say that we did this in good conscience to vote for something not knowing that we have not done our diligent in research? So I ask the indulgence of Mr. Speaker, as well as the Floor Leader and the rest of the members here – can we try to at all possible follow our House Rules, send it to Committee Chair with all the members involved, and that you are requesting that they bring up something that has been in the Committee for at least a year or so. I think that would be the proper way to do this. I think we owe it to our constituents to be able to vote on bills intelligently, not by just, let us do it now because we need to do it now because it is here in front of us. I really believe that we can do better. I truly believe that. That is all I am asking. Based on the questions on this particular bill, I cannot say in

good conscience to vote for it at this point in time because I have questions. I have many concerns, but to sit here for the next hour to talk about all these concerns and debate it, this is the wrong place to do it. I believe it is the wrong place to do it. We should have at least more information, the facts, the research, something so that way we can debate on those points rather than just the bill in its present form. I ask right now, Mr. Speaker, and I recommend that we have this go back to the Committee and be reviewed, and give then give us something with some kind of research backing it. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: So noted, on your concern. Let me recognize Representative Torres.

Rep. Torres: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am confident that the author of this bill did his diligent in coming up with this bill. Just for informational purpose, Vice Speaker, what is the going rate on the tax table? How much are you paying now?

Vice Speaker Quitugua: Mr. Speaker, this is the tax table that is in the book. On line 19, this is the end of the tax table. It says...

Rep. Torres: Mr. Vice Speaker, how much are you paying from your salary now?

Vice Speaker Quitugua: I am paying 9%.

Rep. Torres: You are paying 9%? Mr. Speaker, I am ready to vote in favor of the bill. I am satisfied with the answer. He worked on it diligently.

The Chair recognized the author, Vice Speaker.

Vice Speaker Quitugua: Mr. Speaker, with all do respect to the members, when a bill is placed on the Calendar especially if it is on the Calendar for several sessions already, it is incumbent upon each of us to look at the bill, and also look into the bill. If you have questions, we have the legal counsel or if you have question about the finance, you can call the Finance Department. That is what I do when I look at bills in the Calendar. I try to give myself time to look behind the bill rather than waiting for the Committee to give me all the answers that I need to know. It is part of our obligation to look at each bill, whether there is a committee report or not, and ask ourselves questions that are within the bill, and try to help also find the answer. Mr. Speaker, for me, politically, it would be better for me if these taxes are not increased, but my conscience is that, we see our own people being let go because of the situation of the government, and we see the higher earning people enjoy the little tax that they pay. Thank you. If you guys want to return it to the Committee, so be it. If you want to let it sit there forever, I think it would be fine with me too, because nobody wants to increase taxes. If you ask anybody to increase their taxes, you will find people that would say, please increase our taxes by 1% so that we would not get laid off, or my son would not get laid off, but some people would say, I do not want my taxes increased. Nobody wants their taxes increased, but only those people who understand the situation in order to help the others who in need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair recognized Chairwoman Kaipat.

Rep. Kaipat: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to state for the record that I am obviously not opposed to those who are making more money paying their fair share taxes. That is not what I am saying here, but obviously, this is a bill that has no committee report. It was never entertained by the committee. All I am asking for is that we stop this instant soup law making of introducing bills, and putting them right on the Calendar, and voting on them without us doing our due diligent. Usually when we introduce a bill, the understanding is that they go to committee; and the Chairperson of that Committee sends them out for comments, and we have meetings as a Committee to entertain the bill, and whatever the Committee decides, we report that out as a Committee after thorough discussion on such bills. I am not convinced that this was ever done in this case, and in some of the cases of other bills that we entertained. If we are going to take our jobs seriously as lawmakers and debate intelligently, then we cannot be doing this preceding. I do not care about politics. It is not about winning an election. It is about being good policy makers up here, and being responsible lawmakers in passing good laws that will withstand the test of time, and not pass laws that we will turn around and amend the day after you pass it. We are all cognizant of the sufferings of our people, but let us not compound our situation. Let us not compound the mistake by rushing things, and it is good that Representative Torres – you are comfortable, and Vice Speaker you are comfortable. It is good, and I commend you for that, but for my vote – if you want my vote, you have to respect the fact that I do not feel comfortable with this. I really respectfully request of this body that we take our jobs seriously and go back to the way we use to do things, which is to entertain these bills in Committee, deliberate as a Committee, provide Committee Reports to educate our colleagues, and give them time to read the Committee Report, and then come out and debate, and vote your conscience on the floor, but to do so right now, I am sorry, but I do not support this type of law making. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: Any more comments on the bill? Let me just explain something here. I have been the Chair of this House. We have consistently accommodated each and everyone in this Chamber with diplomacy, and that is also to the extent of overriding and suspending some of our House Rules pursuant to the “No Objection Clause” of our parliamentary procedure. I normally request the body for proper motion in many cases, the motion have been upheld, and therefore, some of these bills continue to appear on the Calendar. It is with that reason that I continue to prod again the Committee Chairs to diligently sit down as a Chairman with your Committee members to expedite the process of these bills to certain extend, some of these bills have been recalled pursuant to the authority prescribed in our House Rules approving my the Chairperson. So, these are the relevant internal misunderstanding that at times pops up during House Sessions when some of us are not ready to make a proper decision. It always arises because of – not only because it did not have the Committee Report that in some cases we did not get to have the proper explanation of what the bill is trying to amend or provide for, but however the case may be, I continue to upheld all the members requests’. I see that there was no huge deliberation as far as each member requesting that their bills be placed on the Calendar, and that is the reason why we always come back to the Bill Calendar, and recognizing the Floor Leader to make the proper motion. Take note that when such motions arises, those of you that have objection to any other bills that you do not want to see placed on the Calendar, and that you need time to work on it or research, please always feel free to express yourself. Let us just be diplomatic about it, and try to once again go back to step 1. Okay. I told you all earlier that to suspend anymore of recalling of bills, and placing of bills on the Calendar because we have a huge agenda on the Calendar. I for one would like to see clean-up soon. So let us just tackle this Calendar, and finish off with this one so we can start anew. Any more comment on H. B. No. 15-243? I recognize Representative Tenorio.

Rep. Tenorio: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I fully agree with my colleague, Congresswoman Kaipat. It is just that the bill is a tax bill, and it is a very substantive bill. It is another issue that does not have the impact, and I do not see any reason for too much debate. Also, Mr. Speaker, I just want to be on record that, that is why we have committee that is supposed to be the experts. So we want the Committee to look at this. I know that this has been on the Calendar for how many days, but you know, when you look through the Calendar, perhaps look at the various due diligently work as to the Committee Report that has been done that we can pass. I do not think that anybody had actually looked at every single bill there, and has a reason or a question for every single report. We depend mostly on the Committee – would have to narrow down the ground work so that it can make our job a little bit easier, but we know what is going on, and that is the whole purpose of the Committee. Unfortunately, not all Committees work at a pace that we would all loved to so that we can do our job, but my only objection is – tax bill is a substantive bill. Why are the numbers here are arbitrary here? That is all I am asking. If I had a Committee Report that says that by doing it this way, we alleviate a lot of our – and keep in mind that I am mostly concern about those guys that are not making much money. I know that we are not touching them here which is good. You are only trying to get people with a higher bracket to share more of the burden of running this government, but at the same time, we have to be accountable to that. If they ask you why did you vote on that, just say, well, we want to help the government. I mean, we all know that the bottom line is that we are broke. This government is going to decline, we need more revenues, and that is why it is more important that we look at the bills, and try to make sure that the intention of voting for a particular bill is to solve a certain problem. That is all my comment, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Chair recognized Chairman Ogo.

Rep. Ogo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to share of what I have heard from the other members, and what I am hearing here is the word, “impact.” The only impact that we see with H. B. NO. 15-243 specifically is the reduction of earnings for individuals that makes over \$50,000.00 and above. On page 2 of the bill establishes the percentage for each wage earner. All of us here understands that the amendment that the Vice Speaker made. The question is are we prepared to pass this and have the doctors, the cabinet members, the justices, are we prepared to dig into their pockets? That is the actual impact that is going to happen. Why? Because eventually, I am happy that Representative Tenorio mentioned – have we looked into the impact of what would happen if an individual making over \$60,000.00 have 5 kids...that is a considerable amount of percentage that we are going to reduce in that individual’s financial. So the question here, and even if we bring it to the Committee, we still have to have that question in our mind – are we ready to go into these people’s pockets? Are we prepared to make that decision today, or even if we have a Committee Report? I agree with this bill and I am supporting it. All I can say today is that this is a Robin Hood Bill, and are we prepared to be the Robin Hood today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair recognized the Minority Leader.

Rep. Palacios: Thank you. I sense the concern of every member because taxation is not the issue – the impacts – secondly, it requires a lot more thought and data. Having said that, it is a rather simple yet high impact legislation. It is a simple legislation, but it has a fairly high impact, and that it creates an additional scale for those in the higher income level beyond \$60,000.00. But again, Vice Speaker, I support something like this, but at the same time, why did we stop at \$100,000.00? You do not have to answer that now, but let me just continue. Would it not be better if we continue on

and say, if you make \$110,000.00 it would be 15%, and if you make anything beyond \$120,000.00 it be 16% or 17% and continue on, because there are individuals that are making beyond \$100,000.00, and what your initial change in this table was to go beyond the \$60,000.00 threshold and increase that 1%. Everyone is concerned about those low income people carrying the burden. Would it not be better if we increase the threshold of no tax? For example, \$0-\$1,000 or \$0-\$7,500 and have no tax at that bracket, and start from \$7,500 to \$15,000.00 on and beyond? Would that not alleviate a little bit more of the burden on the low end wage earners? Would that not, Mr. Chairman of Ways and Means, be a better Robin Hood Bill? But there are a lot of options, and I agree to a large extent. I was actually ready to support the legislation because it does expand, and increase the tax breaks of those making wages beyond \$60,000.00, but the issues that were raised were very valid. I think perhaps, we should consider putting this on First Reading, and then task our good Chairman on Ways and Means to really look into this. Maybe we can adjust it further. I am ready irregardless to vote on it or put it away, but I think that if we look at it, and there are potentials for further amendments to perhaps make this a better legislation and a more accommodating legislation for those in the lower income bracket. Thank you.

The Chair recognized the author.

Vice Speaker Quitugua: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If it is going to serve to improve the bill, I am willing to send it back to the Committee, but Mr. Speaker, when they did our...tax back then, I do not think that anybody was earning \$50,000.00. That is why they just put \$50,000.00 and over. Even back then, our Governor was only earning \$8,000.00 a year, but now that there are more people earning, both in the government and private sector more than \$50,000.00, I think we need to look at this tax bracket, and make the wage tax system fair. With that, Mr. Speaker, if no objection, and if the Chairman of Ways and Means is willing to tackle the bill, and to come up with a report, I am okay. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: That is a good compromise. Before I recognize a subsidiary motion to refer this to the Committee on Ways and Means, I strongly urge the Committee members to diligently look at this issue. It is a matter of getting the numbers, who would be impacted, and to the dollar figures that we can realize as a result of this proposed legislation, and how much would the government realize from this legislation? Floor Leader recognized.

Floor Leader Florencio Deleon Guerrero: So moved, Mr. Speaker, to refer H. B. NO. 15-243 to the Ways and Means Committee.

The motion to refer H. B. NO. 15-243 to the Ways and Means Committee was carried by voice vote.

Speaker Babauta: The motion is carried. Before we move on, may I kindly ask the indulgence of the members if we can go back to item number 4, under Introduction of Resolution.

There was no objection.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

H. R. NO. 15-111: A House Resolution supporting Taiwan's participation as an observer at the 60th Annual Meeting of the World Health Assembly in Geneva on May 2007.

Offered by: Rep. Oscar M. Babauta and seventeen others

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

Floor Leader Florencio Deleon Guerrero: So moved, Mr. Speaker, for the suspension motion for the adoption of H. R. NO. 15-111.

The suspension motion was seconded and carried by voice vote.

Speaker Babauta: The motion is carried.

Floor Leader Florencio Deleon Guerrero: So moved, Mr. Speaker, for the adoption of H. R. NO. 15-111.

The motion was seconded.

H. R. NO. 15-111: A House Resolution supporting Taiwan's participation as an observer at the 60th Annual Meeting of the World Health Assembly in Geneva on May 2007.

Speaker Babauta: Discussion. I recognize Representative Yumul.

Rep. Yumul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not recall in the past, but have we been including the Washington Representative or it is not necessary?

Speaker Babauta: We just patterned this to the previous legislative terms when this Resolution started popping out in the 10th Legislature.

Rep. Yumul: Thank you.

The Chair recognized the Minority Leader.

Rep. Palacios: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I remembered that you introduced a similar resolution in the Fourteenth Legislature. So what was the result? Was Taiwan allowed to participate in the annual meeting at the World Health Assembly in Geneva?

Speaker Babauta: Yes.

Rep. Palacios: So our Resolution had a positive effect?

Speaker Babauta: Yes, in essence.

Rep. Palacios: Thank you.

The Chair recognized Chairwoman Kaipat.

Rep. Kaipat: Mr. Speaker, just for clarification purposes since we are adopting Resolutions, but last couple sessions that we had, I introduced Resolutions also, and I just want to get some clarification as to whether those were adopted.

Speaker Babauta: I believe they were because they are no longer in the Calendar. If there are any concerns about any of the Resolutions that you wish to address on the next session – to be presented, kindly talk to the Clerk so that we can engross them and expedite them.

Rep. Kaipat: Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: There being no objection, ready.

There being no further discussion, H. R. NO. 15-111 was adopted by a voice vote.

Speaker Babauta: The motion is carried. I recognize Representative Tebuteb.

Rep. Tebuteb: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just going to make some amendments, but since we already passed the bill, it is okay.

Speaker Babauta: We will consider that technical. Unless we want to accommodate, Representative Tebuteb. Thank you. Without no objection, let us move on item number 15, and I recognize the Floor Leader.

BILL CALENDAR

Floor Leader Florencio Deleon Guerrero: So moved, Mr. Speaker, for the passage on First and Final Reading, S. B. No. 15-80.

The motion was seconded.

S. B. No. 15-80: A BILL FOR AN ACT TO RENAME THE TINIAN HEALTH CENTER TO “LUCIA “CHIANG” VILLAGOMEZ ARIZAPA HEALTH CENTER; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Speaker Babauta: Discussion. Clerk, call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll on the motion to pass S. B. NO. 15-80 on First and Final Reading:

Rep. Martin B. Ada	excused
Rep. Edwin P. Aldan	yes
Rep. Francisco S. Dela Cruz	yes
Rep. Florencio T. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Rep. Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero	yes
Rep. Jacinta M. Kaipat	yes
Rep. Jesus SN. Lizama	yes
Rep. Crispin M. Ogo	yes
Rep. Arnold I. Palacios	yes
Rep. Justo S. Quitugua	yes
Rep. Benjamin B. Seman	yes

Rep. Candido B. Taman	excused
Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb	yes
Rep. Manuel A. Tenorio	yes
Rep. Stanley T. Torres	yes
Rep. Absalon V. Waki, Jr.	yes
Rep. Ray N. Yumul	yes
Rep. Oscar M. Babauta	yes

Speaker Babauta: By a vote of 16 “yes”, S. B. NO. 15-80 hereby passes the House on First and Final Reading. Next bill, Floor Leader.

Floor Leader Florencio Deleon Guerrero: So moved, Mr. Speaker, for the passage on First and Final Reading, H. L. I. NO. 15-8, HD2.

The motion was seconded.

H. L. I. No. 15-8, HD2: A HOUSE LEGISLATIVE INITIATE TO AMEND ARTICLE III, SECTION 11 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS TO AUTHORIZE THE ELECTION OF AN ATTORNEY GENERAL; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Speaker Babauta: Discussion. I recognize the author if he has officially introduced the House Draft 2.

Rep. Dela Cruz: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it has been introduced.

Speaker Babauta: Okay. We will be discussing, H. L. I. NO. 15-8, HD2. Let us have a brief recess.

The House recessed at 4:00 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 4:10 p.m.

Speaker Babauta: We are back to our plenary session, and I recognize Chairman Ogo.

Rep. Ogo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a simple floor amendment to compliment H. L. I. NO. 15-8, HS1. On page 2, line 9 through 12. Let me just read the amendment that the author made. “There is in the Commonwealth government an office of Attorney General to be headed by the Attorney General. The Office of the Attorney General is established as an independent agency of the Commonwealth government.” In case this amendment gets ratified by the voters in the next election, I have a written floor amendment which everyone is provided. That is to add a new subsection “(i)” at page 4, line 4, to read as follows: “The Legislature shall appropriate funds for the execution of the duties as provided by law of the attorney general, and for the departments, divisions, and agencies under the direction of the attorney general as provided by law. Any fiscal year appropriation for the departments, divisions, and agencies under the direction of the attorney general in effect at the time of the enactment of this provision shall continue unless revised or ratified by law.” Thank you.

The written floor amendment offered by Chairman Ogo was seconded.

Rep. Torres: Point of information.

Speaker Babauta: State your point of information.

Rep. Torres: I think there is a typo here. It is showing here a new subsection (j).

Speaker Babauta: Let me recognize the counsel to clarify that.

Legal Counsel Ian Catlett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to make that clear, I drafted that floor amendment when we were looking at a different version of H. L. I. NO. 15-8. So the changes that the Chairman Ogo mentioned, there is no subsection (i) now, so we had to move that up to (i) instead of (j), and also the page numbering changed. Those are just the two changes because we have a new draft of H. L. I. NO. 15-8. It should be on line 4, page 4, Subsection (i).

Speaker Babauta: Let me clarify this. How many of you have a copy of H. L. I. NO. 15-8 that is written in the form of HD2 that is boxed passed on First Reading on February 26, 2007? Does anybody have that?

Rep. Ogo: We should be reading on House Substitute.

Speaker Babauta: Absolutely. That is what I am saying. Who has a copy of the substitute? Short recess.

The House recessed at 4:14 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 4:25 p.m.

Speaker Babauta: We are back to our plenary session, and I recognize Representative Ogo to withdraw his original motion.

Rep. Ogo: So moved, Mr. Speaker. I move to withdraw my original floor amendment.

Speaker Babauta: Any objection.

There was no objection.

Speaker Babauta: So ordered. Okay. We will continue to discuss, H. L. I. NO. 15-8, HD2, and I recognize the Minority Leader.

Rep. Palacios: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the Executive Director of the Board of Election, where are we in this? Would it be prudent to move beyond this or to perhaps hold off and address this issue, because this is critical? We may be passing this Legislative Initiative in the House, and maybe the Senate would pass it, but to be of veto exercise, I believe and I am willing because I co-

sponsored this Initiative, but in view of the letter from Mr. Sablan, I think it would be prudent to hold off the passing of this Legislative Initiative today. Perhaps the Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations could seek an audience or the Chair could seek an audience to give us the direction on all the – not just on this Initiative, but we have a potential – another 10 or 11 other in the books. I think it is practical, Mr. Speaker, to hold it off today, and seek audience with our Executive Director immediately to give us an indication as to how much we need to come up with to even do one. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: As you noticed, I passed out a letter from the Executive Director concerning that Initiative that is now sitting with the Commission. I told you earlier about – as a result of our financial condition, he has indicated that unless the Legislature come up with funding to fund that specific Initiative to be published in the newspaper, which requires him and the Election Commission pursuant to statute that was recently enacted by this Legislature, earlier I ask Chairman Ogo to seek a dialogue with the Executive Director, and to get me the information so I can probably seek an audience with him and that of the Senate to see how best we can address and assist him financially. I share the Minority Leader’s concern with respect to public education, and the potential Initiative that would be pushing. I understand that there are two from the Natural Resources that are forthcoming soon, and I think from JGO with respect to governmental reorganization. So unless there is a consensus from the members, we will take that recommendation, but however the case may be, I would recommend that we just hold this on the Calendar until we get the financial issue straighten out. Chairwoman Kaipat, you have something to talk about?

Rep. Kaipat: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree wholeheartedly with you and Representative Palacios. I do have several Initiatives in JGO that we are going to invite the Committee members to meet this week, but I really think that we need to invite, Mr. Sablan, to dialogue with us to find out if meeting on those pending Initiatives is even necessary at this point if we do not have the financial resources to do something with them. So I would like to volunteer to invite Mr. Sablan to meet with us. I know that you expressed an interest, and I do not know if the whole House is interested in meeting with Mr. Sablan at this point, but certainly Ways and Means, and Natural Resources Committee, and JGO – we have Initiatives in our Committees, so just for efficiency matters, I think we should just all pick a date where we can all sit down together and talk to Mr. Sablan. Mr. Speaker, I know that you are also interested.

Speaker Babauta: Of course, because I got his letter. Just to some members or to all of you, I do not know if anyone of you knew about the rate of the full page ad in the newspaper. It runs a little bit of \$600.00. We have to be mindful of that, but before we make any decision regarding H. L. I. No 15-8, I recommend that we recognize the author so that he can introduce his substitute officially then further discussion could be suspended until we meet with Mr. Sablan. Is that a compromising recommendation to all of you? I recognize the Vice Speaker.

Vice Speaker Quitugua: Mr. Speaker, before the introduction is made of Mr. Sablan, probably the Committee should request that he prepare an estimate of how much would it cost the Board of Election to do a run-off election incase the run-off Initiative is ratified by the people. Thank you.

Speaker Babauta: Okay. Take note on that. We have to be mindful because it was us that authorized that public education through enactment of legislation. So let us be cognizant of that

recent law that requires...Congressman, this House would be more than happy to accept your substitute officially now, and then we will continue to discuss the amendments...

Rep. Dela Cruz: Mr. Speaker, can I just ask for one minute recess.

Speaker Babauta: Okay. Short recess.

The House recessed at 4:30 p.m.

RECESS

The House reconvened at 4:32 p.m.

Speaker Babauta: We are back to our plenary session, and I now recognize Representative Dela Cruz.

Rep. Dela Cruz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, I would like to introduce, H. L. I. NO. 15-8 in the form of House Draft 2, House Substitute 1. Thank you.

The substitute motion was seconded and carried by voice vote.

Speaker Babauta: The motion is carried. We will now continue to discuss, H. L. I. No. 15-8, HD1, HS1, and at the consensus of the members, because of the financial conditions of the Election Commission that we agree that we live this on the Calendar, and the amendment would follow through next session when we have resources to assist the Election Commission in carrying out its mandate pursuant to law. I recognize Representative Torres.

Rep. Torres: You mentioned that there is House Substitute 1?

Speaker Babauta: Chairman Dela Cruz just officially introduced and passed out a copy. Did you get one? Not yet. Sergeant-at-Arms...does everyone have copies? Please make sure that you retain that copy because that would be the copy we will be discussing at the next session. Because it is now 4:35 p.m., I ask for your humble cooperation that we recess. I recognize the Floor Leader for adjournment.

Floor Leader Florencio Deleon Guerrero: So moved, Mr. Speaker, for recess subject to your call.

Speaker Babauta: The House stands recess subject to the call.

MISCELLANEOUS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

The House adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicky T. Guerrero, Journal Clerk
House of Representatives

APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS

Second appearance
None

Third Appearance:
None