

RECORD OF THE SENATE

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2001

OPENING OF THE SESSION

At 3:52 p.m., the President Pro Tempore, Hon. Manuel B. Villar Jr., called the session to order.

The President Pro Tempore. The 39th session of the First Regular Session of the Twelfth Congress is hereby called to order.

Let us all stand for the opening prayer to be led by Sen. Panfilo M. Lacson, after which, the Palawan Day Care Center students shall lead us in the singing of the Philippine National Anthem. After the singing of the Philippine National Anthem, they will render another song entitled Dakilang Lahi.

Everybody rose for the prayer.

PRAYER

Senator Lacson.

O God, our Creator, we are gathered here in Your spirit and light. We know You are here with us. Your presence allows us to manage to see the image of Your Son in each and every one of us.

You know that our country is now warped with so many problems—social, political, economic and spiritual.

It is now that we pray, O Lord, that our country be blessed this lifetime, with an awareness of Your love and presence. Being with You alone surpasses all troubles befalling our country and our lives.

Finally...may every one of us find the peace, love, joy and serenity which You have already given to us on the day You died on the cross.

Amen.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Everybody remained standing for the singing of the national anthem.

ROLL CALL

The President Pro Tempore. The Secretary will please call the roll.

The Secretary, reading:

- Senator Edgardo J. Angara Present
Senator Teresa Aquino-Oreta Present
Senator Joker P. Arroyo Present
Senator Robert Z. Barbers *
Senator Rodolfo G. Biazon Present
Senator Renato L. Compañero Cayetano Present
Senator Noli "Kabayan" L. De Castro Present
Senator Luisa "Loi" P. Ejercito Estrada Present
Senator Juan M. Flavier Present
Senator Gregorio B. Honasan Present
Senator Robert S. "JAWO" Jaworski Present
Senator Panfilo M. Lacson Present
Senator Loren B. Legarda Leviste *
Senator Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr. Present
Senator Blas F. Ople *
Senator John Henry R. Osmeña Present
Senator Sergio R. Osmeña III Present
Senator Francis N. Pangilinan Present
Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr. *
Senator Ralph G. Recto Present
Senator Ramon B. Revilla Present
Senator Vicente C. Sotto III Present
Senator Manuel B. Villar Jr. Present
The President *

The President Pro Tempore. With 19 senators present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

THE JOURNAL

Senator Flavier. Mr. President, I move that we dispense with the reading of the Journal of the 38th session dated November 14, 2001 and consider it approved.

The President Pro Tempore. Is there any objection? [Silence] There being none, the motion is approved.

Senator Flavier. Mr. President, I move that we proceed to the Reference of Business.

The President Pro Tempore. Is there any objection? [Silence] There being none, the motion is approved.

The Secretary will read the Reference of Business.

* On official mission

Senator Flavier. Mr. President, during the brief intermission, we consulted each other and came to the conclusion that a seconding statement was made by Sen. Rodolfo G. Biazon.

So with that as clearly manifested, we are now deferring action on that motion with the concurrence of the movant and meanwhile, we are ready to take up Senate Bill No. 1824 on the ROTC bill.

Now may I move that we recognize the principal sponsor, Sen. Renato L. *Compañero* Cayetano, for a brief manifestation.

The President Pro Tempore. Sen. Renato L. *Compañero* Cayetano is recognized.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO
(Senators Angara, Revilla, Flavier, Sotto and Honasan
as Additional Coauthors of
S. No. 1824)

Senator Cayetano. Thank you, Mr. President. With the permission of the Acting Majority Leader, I wish to manifest, for the record, that the following are additional coauthors of Senate Bill No. 1824, entitled "An Act Establishing the National Service Training Program for Tertiary Level Students, Amending for the Purpose Republic Act No. 7077 and Presidential Decree No. 1706, and for Other Purposes": Senators Angara, Revilla, Flavier, Sotto and Honasan.

The President Pro Tempore. The additional coauthors are duly recognized.

Senator Cayetano. Thank you.

The President Pro Tempore. The Majority Leader is recognized.

Senator Flavier. Mr. President, before we proceed, may I inform the Body that the measure at hand, Senate Bill No. 1824, has been approved on Second Reading on November 14, 2001 and certified by Malacañang as urgent based on a letter transmitted on October 18, 2001. May we ask that the Secretary read the letter.

The President Pro Tempore. The Secretary will read the letter.

The Acting Secretary [Atty. Reyes].

October 18, 2001

HON. FRANKLIN M. DRILON
Senate President
Philippine Senate
Pasay City

Dear Senate President Drilon:

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 26 (2), Article VI of the Constitution, I hereby certify to the necessity of the immediate enactment of Senate Bill No. 1824, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN OPTIONAL
RESERVED OFFICERS TRAINING CORPS
(ROTC), ESTABLISHING ALTERNA-
TIVE NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS
SUCH AS PEACEKEEPING AND CIVIC WEL-
FARE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE IN
COLLEGIATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,

to address the growing public clamor to make the ROTC Program optional and at the same time institute other systems of citizen preparedness to participate in the social, civic and security services program of government.

Best wishes.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO

Encl. As stated.

cc: Hon. JOSE C. DE VENECIA JR.
Speaker
House of Representatives
Quezon City

BILL ON THIRD READING
S. No. 1824 — Optional ROTC Program

Senator Flavier. Mr. President, I move that we vote on Third Reading on Senate Bill No. 1824.

The President Pro Tempore. Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, voting on Third Reading on Senate Bill No. 1824 is now in order.

The Secretary will please read only the title of the bill.

The Acting Secretary [Atty. Reyes]. Senate Bill No. 1824, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR TERTIARY LEVEL STUDENTS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7077 AND PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1706, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

The President Pro Tempore. We shall now vote on the bill and the Secretary will call the roll.

The Acting Secretary [Atty. Reyes]. Honorable Senators

Angara..... Yes

Senator Angara. Mr. President.

The President Pro Tempore. Sen. Edgardo J. Angara is recognized.

EXPLANATION OF VOTE OF SENATOR ANGARA

Senator Angara. Mr. President, I vote in favor of this bill. I think it is a laudable bill. I vote primarily because I would like to see the day when the Philippines will have no more standing army and would be training people for civic welfare as well as social development. I believe that the ROTC program, while a very important source of officer corps in the military, maybe is not the best system for training our military officers.

Of course, we always say that the civilian dimension of the military is supplied more by the ROTC graduates than by the PMA graduates. But still after almost 60 years of a standing army, I believe that the Philippines should aspire to a status where there will be no more standing army and all the able-bodied men and women will be serving in the civilian field, especially in literacy, in health and in environment as envisioned by this bill.

I will submit a lengthier explanation, Mr. President, but in the meantime that would suffice for voting affirmatively for this measure.

Thank you.

The following is the written explanation of vote of Senator Angara:

The challenge of developing a sense of nationalism and civic consciousness among the modern day Filipino youth has become greater than ever before. At this time, we need to develop a citizenry who will be instrumental in promoting civic welfare and social development. In the long run, our country will be needing more able-bodied

people who will be serving in their civilian capacity in the fields of literacy, health, environment and other civic welfare activities.

While there is a need to continuously strengthen our military corps, it is also necessary to broaden the present ROTC program as a vehicle not only in providing military training for our tertiary students, but more importantly to cater to the other socio-civic needs of our country in light of the changing times.

I would like to see the day when the Philippines will have no more standing army but a corps of young Filipinos who are trained to practice voluntarism and patriotism in the service of the nation.

In view of this, there is a need to expand the opportunities available to the youth to be involved in community service and development programs. In this regard, we have voted for the passage of the National Service Training Program Act of 2001.

The law has institutionalized a comprehensive training program which will enhance the youth's active contribution to general welfare. Through this law, we can encourage the youth to become more involved in community activities which are vital in nation-building.

The Acting Secretary [Atty. Reyes]. Senators

Aquino-Oreta Yes
Arroyo Yes
Barbers
Biazon Yes
Cayetano Yes

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President.

The President Pro Tempore. Sen. Renato L. Compañero Cayetano is recognized.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR CAYETANO (In Appreciation of the Support Given to S. No. 1824)

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, with the permission of the Body, I am not here to explain my vote because obviously my vote is in the affirmative being the principal sponsor. I just want to put on record that in my three years in this Chamber, I have not seen a bill that has been debated, interpellated and given a lot of attention and support by practically all the members of this Chamber. And I wish to put on record our appreciation on behalf

of the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture as well as on behalf of my cochairman, Senator Magsaysay of the Committee on National Defense and Security for the tremendous support that has been given to this bill.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President Pro Tempore. Thank you, Senator Cayetano.

The Acting Secretary [Atty. Reyes]. Senators

- De Castro Yes
- Legarda Leviste
- Magsaysay Jr. Yes
- Ople
- Osmeña (J.) Yes

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President.

The President Pro Tempore. Sen. John H. Osmeña is recognized.

EXPLANATION OF VOTE OF SENATOR J. OSMEÑA

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, I would just like to explain my vote very briefly.

I have supported this bill, and I am voting in favor of this bill. As a matter of fact, I have introduced a number of amendments for which I thank the sponsors for accepting them—the amendment on the suspension of ROTC requirements.

I have been told when I went to Cebu over the weekend that thousands of students have not been able to graduate because they have failed to comply with the ROTC requirements. I am glad that with this suspension, these young men and women who have completed their academic studies will finally graduate.

The other matter, Mr. President, which is the other amendment that we were able to introduce is the matter of scholarship; that it should be equitably distributed nationwide.

The education budget of this country is vastly distorted. Almost 75% of the money is spent in NCR. That is why I introduced this amendment so that the sad experience of education—for example, the UP budget until a few years ago was totally an NCR-concentrated budget. To this day, the distortion continues and persists notwithstanding the fact that, unfortunately, the Cebuano president of UP does not even see the light despite the fact that we have had three budget hearings and we have tried to hammer this fact into him. That is the other amendment that we introduced.

But more than these amendments, Mr. President, we are bringing to an end 50 years of waste—waste of time, waste of man-hours, waste of resources.

During the interpellations, we were able to establish that at least P345 million a year is being wasted on the ROTC program. That is 50 years of P345 million. That is, shall we say, cause for celebration—bringing an end to this waste. Hence, my affirmative vote, Mr. President.

Thank you.

The President Pro Tempore. Thank you, Senator Osmeña.

The Acting Secretary [Atty. Reyes]. Senators

- Osmeña III Yes
- Pangilinan Yes

Senator Pangilinan. Mr. President

The President Pro Tempore. Sen. Francis N. Pangilinan is recognized.

EXPLANATION OF VOTE OF SENATOR PANGILINAN

Senator Pangilinan. Mr. President, just a few words.

I vote in the affirmative and as the second youngest member of this Chamber, I vote in favor of the bill because it represents the clamor and sentiments of our young people.

I was a freshman in the University of the Philippines 20 years ago and the issues raised then about the relevance of the ROTC are still the issues raised today. I am amplifying the observations of Sen. John Osmeña that indeed, at least 20 years later from my time, the clamor and the question regarding the relevance of ROTC, *sabi nga po nila*, is like a broken record.

Finally, at least from my point of view, after 20 years when I was a freshman in the university, the issues and questions raised 20 years ago are finally, with this bill becoming law, being resolved. Two decades is too long a time for our young people to have a law that will make ROTC meaningful and the other service programs. So, I vote in the affirmative.

Thank you.

The President Pro Tempore. Thank you, Senator Pangilinan.

The Acting Secretary [Atty. Reyes]. Senators

- Pimentel Jr.

Ejercito Estrada Yes
 Flavier Yes
 Honasan Yes

Senator Honasan. Mr. President.

The President Pro Tempore. Sen. Gregorio B. Honasan is recognized.

EXPLANATION OF VOTE OF SENATOR HONASAN

Senator Honasan. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I would like to explain my vote. I support the bill. I vote for its passage. Just like Senator Angara, I look at this bill as a step that will bring us closer to our objective of seeing the day when we will not have a standing army because the Philippines—its citizens—will be an army.

We also look forward to the day when this bill will allow us to clearly promulgate a national security strategy and policy that is derived from a very clear definition of our national interest.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President Pro Tempore. Thank you, Senator Honasan.

The Acting Secretary [Atty. Reyes]. Senators

Jaworski Yes
 Lacson Yes
 Recto Yes
 Revilla Yes
 Sotto III Yes
 Villar Yes
 The Senate President

APPROVAL OF S. NO. 1824 ON THIRD READING

The President Pro Tempore. With 19 affirmative votes, no negative vote, and no abstention, Senate Bill No. 1824 is approved on Third Reading.

The Chair wishes to congratulate the authors of the bill and all those who participated in the crafting of this very important bill, Senate Bill No. 1824.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON S. NO. 1824/H. NO. 3593 (Optional ROTC Program)

Senator Flavier. Mr. President, may I move for the nomination of the Senate Bicameral Panel for Senate Bill No. 1824 composed of four Majority members and three Minority members, namely: Sen. Renato L. Compañero Cayetano, as chairman, Sen. Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr., Sen. Noli "Kabayan" De Castro and Sen. Francis N. Pangilinan, for the Majority; and Sen. Vicente C. Sotto III, Sen. Rodolfo G. Biazon and Sen. Panfilo M. Lacson, for the Minority.

The President Pro Tempore. Is there any objection? [Silence] There being none, the motion is approved.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

Senator Flavier. With the concurrence of the Minority leaders, may I move that we adjourn the session until three o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, November 20, 2001.

The President Pro Tempore. Is there any objection? [Silence] There being none, the session is adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, November 20, 2001.

It was 5:36 p.m.