

# RECORD OF THE SENATE

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2007

## OPENING OF THE SESSION

*At 4:09 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Manny Villar, called the session to order.*

**The President.** The 61st session of the Third Regular Session of the Thirteenth Congress is hereby called to order.

Let us all stand for the opening prayer to be led by Sen. Richard J. Gordon.

*Everybody rose for the prayer.*

## PRAYER

**Senator Gordon.**

Lord, we bow before You today, sincerely hoping that You will lend an ear to our prayer. There have been many prayers in this Chamber. Everyday we pray and we sincerely hope that You lend an ear to our prayers today. We pray for Your guidance and Your spirit that we may be led by Your will in the final days of the Thirteenth Congress and use this remaining time to pass legislations that would promote the welfare and prosperity of our people.

We pray likewise for our colleagues who are ending their terms as senators of the land. We thank You, Lord, for the wisdom that they have shared with this august House and we pray that You will lead them to paths that would enable them to continue to serve the interests of the nation outside of the Senate.

We pray for humility, Lord, that we may, as a nation, submit ourselves to Your will in order to achieve the greatness that You intended for our beloved country; that You imbue this nation with worthy causes, Lord, and the courage and fortitude to pursue and realize these causes, for a nation without a worthy cause is a nation without a soul.

Strengthen our minds that we may understand that each of us must do our part in the work of nation-building, and bless us with a generous heart to give the best of ourselves that we may be worthy of our position, our families, and our paramount role as a citizen of this nation.

And, Lord, I would like to end with the prayer of Saint Ignatius:

Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous; teach me to serve Thee as Thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to labor and not to seek for rest; to toil and not to ask for reward; save that of knowing I am doing Thy most holy and sacred will.

Amen.

## ROLL CALL

**The President.** The Secretary will please call the roll.

**The Secretary, reading:**

Senator Edgardo J. Angara .....	Present
Senator Joker P. Arroyo .....	Present
Senator Rodolfo G. Biazon .....	Present
Senator Compañera Pia S. Cayetano .....	Present
Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago .....	Present
Senator Franklin M. Drilon .....	Present
Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada .....	Present
Senator Luisa "Loi" P. Ejercito Estrada .....	Present
Senator Juan Ponce Enrile .....	Present*
Senator Juan M. Flavio .....	Present
Senator Richard J. Gordon .....	Present
Senator Panfilo M. Lacson .....	Present
Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid .....	Present
Senator Alfredo S. Lim .....	Present
Senator M. A. Madrigal .....	Present
Senator Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr. ....	Present
Senator Sergio R. Osmeña III .....	Present*
Senator Kiko Pangilinan .....	Present
Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr. ....	Present
Senator Ralph G. Recto .....	Absent
Senator Ramon Bong Revilla Jr. ....	Present
Senator Mar A. Roxas .....	Present*
The President .....	Present

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

## THE JOURNAL

**Senator Pangilinan.** Mr. President, I move that we dispense with the reading of the *Journal* of the 59th session, January 29, 2007 and consider it approved.

\* Arrived after the roll call



# SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR OSMEÑA III

Mr. President, on the amendments to Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, persons with disability comprise one of the most neglected sectors of our society. While in this country, people are known for their love and caring for family members and relatives, especially those who are afflicted with physical or mental defects, without adequate support from the government, the tendency is for them to be neglected and ostracized.

Our Constitution recognizes the need to support persons with disabilities. Article XIII, Section 11, provides that "the State shall give priority to the needs of the underprivileged sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children." In Section 13, a special provision mandated the establishment of a special agency for disabled persons to assist in their rehabilitation, self-development and self-reliance, and their integration into the mainstream of society.

Pursuant to the above constitutional mandates, Republic Act No. 7277, otherwise known as the "Magna Carta for Disabled Persons", was passed in 1992. This landmark legislation was a welcome relief to persons with disabilities as it granted them certain rights and privileges.

This bill therefore seeks to grant persons with disabilities the same privileges enjoyed by senior citizens.

Among these benefits would be: the grant of discounts for the purchase and availment of services of commercial establishments, including government and private hospitals, and the other benefits granted to senior citizens.

I seek the support of this Chamber in the immediate passage of this bill. Let us all remain steadfast in our effort to help improve the lives of the marginalized sectors of society.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President Pro Tempore. The Majority Leader is recognized.

# SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR OSMEÑA III

Senator Osmeña III. Mr. President, may I now deliver the sponsorship speech for the Volunteer Act as covered by Committee Report No. 231.

In the history of human existence, one of the most endearing values is helping one's neighbor. Capturing the essence of this value is the concept of volunteerism, the willingness of people to work on behalf of others without the expectation of pay or other tangible or intangible gain.

The world has benefited from various forms of volunteerism. The various United Nations agencies such as UNICEF and UNESCO, the Red Cross, the Peace Corps, Habitat for Humanity, Emergency Relief for Victims of Tsunami and other such groups are prime examples.

There are two major benefits from volunteerism: first, economic: activities undertaken by volunteers would otherwise have to be funded by the state or by private capital, so the act of volunteering adds to the overall economic output of a country without the burden of government spending; and second, social: volunteering helps to build more cohesive communities, fostering greater trust between citizens, and develop norms of solidarity and reciprocity which are essential to stable communities.

In our country, we call that spirit of neighborly assistance the "bayanihan" system. It is popularly pictured as many people together carrying a *bahay kubo*.

This tradition remains a way of life among our people. It is the social value common among our many volunteers who involve themselves in projects of the national government, local government units, nongovernment organizations and community-based organizations.

Our government recognizes the important role of volunteerism in national development. It has included volunteerism as a modality in the implementation of priority programs and projects and sustains a strong linkage with volunteer groups. To maximize the benefits from volunteer service programs, a single agency was created to oversee these programs, the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA).

The bill before us seeks to further rekindle the time-honored tradition of *bayanihan* through the following:

- 1) by providing a policy framework on volunteerism which will harmonize the efforts of the volunteers sector with local and national development;
- 2) by providing a conducive environment for volunteers and volunteer service organizations through mechanisms that will protect their rights and recognize their contributions in society; and
- 3) by strengthening the role of the PNVSCA in promoting volunteerism.

Among the salient provisions of this bill are:

- 1) establishment of a system of national registration and networking of volunteers and volunteer service organizations;