

RECORD OF THE SENATE

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1998

OPENING OF THE SESSION

At 3:26 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Marcelo B. Fernan called the session to order.

The President. The 18th session of the Senate in the First Regular Session of the 11th Congress is hereby called to order.

We shall be led in prayer by Sen. Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr.

Everybody rose for the prayer.

PRAYER

Senator Pimentel.

Lord, as we, Your senators, pray to You, this afternoon, we echo what the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr has once said:

Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime, therefore, we must be saved by hope.

Nothing that is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in the immediate context of history, therefore, we must be saved by faith.

Nothing we do, however, virtuous, can be accomplished alone, therefore, we must be saved by love.

Indeed, Lord, we ask that You strengthen our hope in ourselves so that we may overcome any adversity that comes our way; that You fortify our faith in You so that You will always be there to hold our hand as we cut our way through the thickets of materialism that seems to suffocate the values that we hold dear; and that You animate our love for one another, for our people and for our country so that whatever we do as legislators or as plain citizens, we do for Your greater glory and the welfare of our people.

Finally, Lord, we pray that You enlighten our President, Joseph Ejercito Estrada, whom You have called by name even before he was conceived in his mother's womb to be the leader of this country at this crucial moment of our history, so that he may be rid of any and all vices, real or imaginary, to enable him to fulfill his

campaign promise that his presidency will be for the *mahirap* of the land, not for those who are greedily trying to make hay while the Erap sun shines in Malacañang.

All this, we ask in the name of Jesus, Your son and our Lord.

Amen.

The President. Thank you, Senator Pimentel.

ROLL CALL

The Secretary will please call the roll.

The Secretary, reading:

Senator Teresa Aquino-Oreta	Present
Senator Robert Z. Barbers	Present
Senator Rodolfo G. Biazon	Present
Senator Renato L. <i>Compañero</i> Cayetano	Present
Senator Anna Dominique M.L. Coseteng ..	Present
Senator Franklin M. Drilon	Present
Senator Juan Ponce Enrile	Present
Senator Juan M. Flavier	Present
Senator Teofisto T. Guingona Jr.	Present
Senator Gregorio B. Honasan	Present
Senator Robert S. Jaworski	Present
Senator Loren B. Legarda-Leviste	Present
Senator Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr.	Present
Senator Blas F. Ople	**
Senator John Henry R. Osmeña	Present
Senator Sergio R. Osmeña III	Present
Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr.	Present
Senator Ramon B. Revilla	Present
Senator Raul S. Roco	Present
Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago	Present*
Senator Vicente C. Sotto III	Present
Senator Francisco S. Tatad	Absent
The President	Present

The President. With 20 senators being present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

THE JOURNAL

Senator Drilon. Mr. President, I move that we dispense with the reading of the *Journal* of the previous session and consider it approved.

*Arrived after the roll call

**On official mission

So I do not agree that the problem is political. The problem is personal for all members.

Senator Pimentel. Which means, therefore, that personally, the problem must be solved by the person concerned. I do not think the Senate can impose literacy on its members. But, of course, we can suggest, Mr. President.

One specific example, Mr. President. The library of the Senate is acquiring a lot of books. But I think the books are gathering more dust than fingerprints of those reading the books. I would certainly suggest that members of the Senate, for their own edification and enlightenment, should try to refer to the books that are available in the library of the Senate as a concrete proposal along the gentleman's suggestion.

Senator Roco. Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. Every now and then, the librarians pass these new acquisitions, and whenever there are new acquisitions, I try to borrow. Not that I read through all of them. But it is a good habit to develop.

The essential point I am trying to reach or clarify, Mr. President, is precisely because we admonish teachers. My mother was also a public schoolteacher. We admonish Rotary and other civic organizations to carry the burden. Maybe, we should set an example because of this in case of literacy and keeping ourselves informed or developing our consciousness and participation as described here—in the social, cultural, political, economic activities, and for learning throughout life.

Maybe, just maybe, if we are the only Chamber that can criticize our members, then maybe we are the only Chamber that can suggest on how we can help ourselves improve.

Senator Pimentel. That is a very wise suggestion, Mr. President. So that should be addressed to each and every member of this Chamber.

Senator Roco. I did not mean to—in any event, Mr. President, thank you very much for the thoughts.

Senator Pimentel. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Senator Roco.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile?

Senator Drilon. Mr. President, there are no more reservations for interpellation. We thank Senator Pimentel for such timely speech.

MOTION OF SENATOR DRILON
(Referral of Senator Pimentel's Speech to the
Education, Arts and Culture Committee)

May we move that the speech be referred to the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture.

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

The Majority Leader is recognized.

BILL ON SECOND READING
S. No. 1137—Use of Seat Belts Act
(Continuation)

Senator Drilon. Mr. President, may we ask that we resume consideration of Senate Bill No. 1137 as reported out under Committee Report No. 3.

The President. Resumption of consideration of Senate Bill No. 1137 is now in order.

Senator Drilon. There are still a few senators who reserved the right to interpellate. May we ask the Chair to recognize Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta.

The President. Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta is recognized for interpellation on the sponsorship speech of Sen. Vicente C. Sotto III. Please proceed.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Thank you, Mr. President. May I ask the gentleman some questions about this bill?

Senator Sotto. Yes, most willingly, Mr. President.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Mr. President, under Section 11 of the Committee Report, it says here of a nationwide public information campaign. I was just wondering which agency would lead this nationwide public information campaign. I would like to think that this would be some sort of an IEC program concerning the use of safety belts. If that is so, I do not see here any fund or at least an allotment of funds strictly for IEC.

So, I would like to ask, Mr. President: (1) Who is the lead agency that will carry out the public information campaign? and (2) can we put later on some sort of fund that will go for this?

If this will just be left to the different agencies, I am afraid that the program might not be carried out properly since it will have diverse information campaign. I would like to imagine that we will be using the print, radio, television and billboards

if only to inform our people that it will be safer for them to have safety belts in their private vehicles.

Senator Sotto. Mr. President, we completely agree with the statements of the distinguished lady senator. In fact, we would like to point out some of the features that the bill has concerning this. But before we do that, we would just like to thank the distinguished lady for giving us a chance to enlighten the Body more on this.

We specifically incorporated a section that would include a public information campaign because of the case studies that have been done in other countries wherein an information campaign was done to promote the use of safety belts.

It is good to note that from a low of 50- or 60-percent usage, they have gone up, particularly in North Carolina, where there is the biggest rise as far as the use of seat belts is concerned in the United States. It jumped to about 82 percent in less than two years when they conducted an information campaign. They used the campaign slogan, "Click it or ticket." In other words, one clicks his seat belt and if not, he gets a ticket.

With this kind of campaign, we expect something like this to happen in the Philippines. As far as the implementing agency is concerned, the lead agency is the Department of Transportation and Communications in coordination with the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) and the IEC. As for the funds, the committee thought that the penalties and fines that will be collected from this should fund the campaign itself.

Probably, initially, there would not be much funds available but we hope that the Department of Education, Culture and Sports would be able to somewhat put in the seed money before the fines and the penalties come trickling down. This is how we envision this. We have also experienced the number of bills in the Senate and in the House that have had appropriation provisions that have never been funded. So we might as well rely on a self-supporting campaign from the effect of the bill itself.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Mr. President, may I suggest then that for the IEC campaign of this safety belt—I know that each agency has a portion for its IEC campaigns—maybe, we can insert in this bill that, accidents can be lessened if our people were duly informed of the hazards of not wearing a safety belt.

Senator Sotto. I think that is a very laudable idea, Mr. President. At the proper time, in the period of amendments, we would like to entertain a proposal from the distinguished lady concerning this specific point.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Mr. President, I would like to

go to the penalties. Actually, how shall compliance of the bill be made in the case of privately-owned vehicles, let us say, heavily tinted cars and the police or the traffic cops cannot clearly see whether the drivers or the passengers are using safety belts? How will they go after them?

Senator Sotto. There are certain rules already that are being implemented and are supposed to be implemented by the LTO concerning this, the use of totally tinted glasses. It is contained in a memorandum circular which they released way back in 1978. Up to now it is in force and it is only a matter of enforcement.

But let me just pass that, Mr. President. The experience in other countries—because this is the first time we will experience this in the Philippines—is that the enforcers are able to check on the usage of the seat belts when the driver is caught for a violation or is flagged down or is halted for a violation, or for questioning.

In other words, let us face the fact. *Kung talagang heavily tinted hindi nga makikita kapag umaandar ang sasakyan. Ngunit, kapag huminto at gustong siyasatin ng enforcer ang sasakyan, hindi maaaring hindi magbubukas ng bintana at makikita kung gumagamit ng seat belt o hindi iyong driver at mga pasahero.*

That is the way I look at it now, Mr. President. But with the passage of this bill, we could initiate, or we could probably propel the LTO into enforcing stiffer penalties or enforcing strictly Memorandum Circular No. 15. Then probably, this bill will even be a catalyst to the enforcement of other traffic rules, because *bawal po talaga iyong heavy tint, pero marami parin ang gumagamit.*

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Then, Mr. President, before we proceed on this, should we not first go after the violators of that Memorandum Circular No. 15?

Senator Sotto. I do agree, Mr. President, but these laws can be enforced hand-in-hand. There would be time before this law is fully implemented. As I said, this might give them the initiative to be more strict in the enforcement of traffic rules and laws. Therefore, it should be incumbent upon the enforcing agency that they do so.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Lastly, Mr. President, the use of airbags. Do we have any provisions, at least, when we will have to proceed on this? Will we also enforce the use of airbags, at least, in the cars for further safety?

Senator Sotto. Mr. President, it has been proven in major studies abroad that the airbag is only reliable with the use of the seat belts. Even in new cars that are being manufactured now, there are literatures inside the vehicles that inform the

driver and the passengers that the airbags are useless if the driver is not belted.

Therefore, the seat belt is the single most important mechanism that can save lives. The airbag is a supplement to the safety. Especially if there are children in the vehicle, the air bags are proven to be quite a bit detrimental. It is not as safe as a seat belt. Of course, it helps a lot. As I said it is a supplement. But we are not addressing that point in this bill now because we think, as we mentioned the other day, this should be an initial move.

The final, probably, intention of the committee would be, in the near future when we will have created enough awareness already among our motorists, that will probably be the time when we try to enhance more the safety measures that we want to be enforced.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Thank you, Mr. President. I hope the bill will be passed into law if only to lessen accidents.

Thank you.

The President. Thank you, Senator Aquino-Oreta.

Senator Drilon. May I ask that Sen. Ramon Revilla be recognized for the next interpellation.

The President. Senator Revilla is recognized for interpellation.

Senator Revilla. Thank you, Mr. President.

Una sa lahat, Ginoong Pangulo, I would like to congratulate the distinguished sponsor of this measure for submitting before us a very noble, proactive and preventive legislative measure this early in our First Regular Session in the 11th Congress.

Indeed, Mr. President, the need to enact a preventive measure that would help prevent injuries and death to our riding public and private commuters due to vehicular accident is an important concern of this nation.

Before I proceed with my interpellation on this matter, Ginoong Pangulo, gusto ko po lamang sabihin na ako ay sumusuporta sa panukalang batas na ito. As such, my questions would be clarificatory only in nature, dahil gusto kong maliwanagan ang ilang mga bagay na aking napuna sa panukalang batas na ito.

With that, Mr. President, may the distinguished sponsor of this measure yield for some clarificatory questions?

Senator Sotto. Yes, Mr. President, willingly.

Senator Revilla. My first question, Mr. President, revolves around the issue on the total cost of installing one seat belt per jeep. Dahil po sa isinasaad sa Section 4, paragraph 3 on mandatory use of seat belts that motor vehicles, both public and private, which are not equipped with the required seat belt devices are given one year from the effectivity of this Act and upon issuance of the implementing rules and regulations by the DOTC to install seat belt devices in their vehicles.

Ang tanong ko po, Kagalangalang na Pangulo ay ganito: Ilan po bang dyip o taksi o mga sasakyang bayan, in general, ang kailangang maglagay ng seat belt sa buong bansa?

Senator Sotto. Maaari po bang balikan natin iyong huling katanungan? Ang tinatanong po ng kagalangalang na ginoo ay kung ilan ang bilang ng dyip na dapat lagyan ng seat belt?

Senator Revilla. Sa buong bansa. Hindi lang po ang dyip kundi pati taksi, iyong mga sasakyang bayan.

Senator Sotto. Lahat ng mga sasakyan. Wala pong maliwanag kung ilan talaga ang wala. Ngunit ginawa po ng estimate ito ng LTO. Ang estimate nila ay mga 230,000 jeepneys, old cars and old taxis or buses na walang seat belt. Iyon po ang tantiya nila. I do not know where they based this. Basta sinasabi nila sa milyon na mga sasakyan dito, karamihan dito pagtungtong ng 1985 model pabalik ay may seat belt na. Kaya ang pinag-uusapan na lamang dito ay halos mga jeepney at saka ilang mga lumang sasakyan na ginagamit pa rin.

Senator Revilla. Ginoong Pangulo, sa palagay po ninyo magkano ang magiging halaga para magpalagay tayo ng seat belt sa isang dyip o sa isang sasakyan. Magkano ang halaga noon?

Senator Sotto. During the public hearing, Mr. President, iyon pong mga assemblers, manufacturers at iyong mga Philippine Motor Association representatives ay nagkaroon sila ng assessment kung magkano ang mga seat belts. Ang lumalabas, on the average, iyong tinatawag na lap belt or pelvic restraint belt ay P300 ang isang set. Ito po iyong dito lamang sa balakang, iyong katulad ng ginagamit sa eroplano. Ngayon, iyon po namang shoulder belt, P600 or approximately P1,200 iyong buong set ng dalawa.

Senator Revilla. Ginoong Pangulo, sa inyong pananaw, kaya ba natin lagyan ang lahat na mga sasakyan ng seat belts sa loob ng one-year limit?

Senator Sotto. Ang sabi nila ay kaya po nila. Tinanong namin iyong mga gumagawa. Sa loob ng isang taon ay kaya daw nila.

Senator Revilla. Halimbawang hindi nila nakayanang lagyan ng seat belts lahat ng mga sasakyan sa loob ng taning na panahon, sino ngayon ang sisihin natin? Sino ngayon ang mumultahan natin o bibigyan ng penalty? Iyong may-ari ng sasakyan o iyong gumagawa ng sasakyan?

Senator Sotto. Doon po sa ating batas ay maliwanag na hindi nila puwedeng irehistro kung walang seat belt. Kaya nasa may-ari ng sasakyan ang problema. At iyong driver marahil ay hindi gagamitin iyong sasakyan kung walang seat belt dahil siya ang mahuhuli at mapa-fine.

Senator Revilla. Doon po sa ating paggawa ng seat belt, hindi kaya mangangailangan tayo ng malaking halaga, halimbawa dolyar, dahil bibilhin ito sa ibang bansa?

Senator Sotto. Hindi po, hindi gagasta ang gobyerno dito. Ito po ay kaniya-kaniyang system na tinatawag sapagkat inaasahan natin na a great majority of the vehicles ay mayroon ng seat belts. Ang iminamando dito ay ang paggamit ng seat belt. Nilagyan lang natin ng konsiderasyon iyong mga ilang sasakyan na walang seat belt kaya natin binanggit dito iyan.

In other words, hindi malaki ito. Alam naman ninyo ang ingenuity ng Filipino. Kung minsan ay hindi naman bibili iyan ng mga imported diyari na brand new. Bibili ng segunda mano, mahusay pa. Marami iyan sa Gandara at kung saan-saan pa. Alam naman natin ang ingenuity ng Pinoy diyari.

Senator Revilla. Halimbawa po iyong mga seat belt nakalagay na. Ngayon sa katagalan ng panahon nasira na iyon at nagkaroon ng aksidente. Sa pagkasira, naumpog ang ulo ng driver, sino ngayon ang dapat nating sisihin?

Senator Sotto. Ang mananagot niyan ay ang LTO sapagkat hindi po dapat nilang irehistro kung hindi papasa doon sa Bureau of Product Standards at hindi papasa sa kanilang inspeksyon. Mayroon dito sa batas nating sinasabi na dapat ay may inspeksyon tuwing irehistro.

Ang seat belt ay sinusuri hindi lamang sa klase, husay at quality nito kundi pati rin kung ito ay mahusay at magagamit pa.

Senator Revilla. Mr. President, Congress has passed good quality laws before but it is sad to say that our experiences had taught us that these quality laws were not strictly implemented by the government.

Is it possible for us to strengthen the implementation of this measure by providing penalties as well to those traffic enforcers who refuse to fully implement this proposed measure?

Senator Sotto. Opo, puwede nating pag-aralan iyan sapagkat sa totoo lang, iyan ang ating inaasahan dito sa bagong administrasyon. Iyong hindi pa nila nagawa noong nakaraan ay magawa nila ngayon. Isa iyan sa dapat nilang gawin.

Kakaiba po ito. Sa lahat ng batas na ini-enforce natin at na-enforce na natin, ito ang isang batas na ang ipinipilit natin sa kanila ay maging ligtas sila. Ipinipilit natin na maging maingat ang ating mga kababayan. Kaya ang enforcement ng batas na ito baka kalahati lamang ang porsiyento ng enforcement na kailangan dahil ang mga taong bayan mismo, awareness, ang mga driver ay magagamit sapagkat alam nilang kailangan at panahon na para gumamit ng seat belt ang Pilipino.

Senator Revilla. Hindi kaya maging dahilan ito o isa sa mga dahilan na magkakaroon ng extortion ang ating mga pulis dito sa drivers naman ng mga dyipni na ito?

Senator Sotto. Hindi lang naman ito ang dahilan. Maraming puwedeng gamiting dahilan.

Senator Revilla. Isa na sa mga dahilan ito.

Senator Sotto. Maaaring magamit po iyan. Pero katulad ng sinasabi natin, kung ayaw ninyong mabukulan o madeli-hensiyahan, mag-seat belt kayo.

Senator Revilla. Ginoong Pangulo, bakit front seat passenger at driver lamang ang required na gumamit ng seat belt?

Mr. President, I am aware of this question because it was asked yesterday. The premise in yesterday's question was that the impact of the vehicle is caused by the head-on collision. But the premise I will now present to the gentleman is this:

What if the impact came from the side of the vehicle? Hindi po ba kailangang i-secure o pag-ingatan din ang mga back seat passengers lalung-lalo na sa mga dyipni?

Senator Sotto. Tama po iyon.

Senator Revilla. Kung sa gilid ang tama, baka dahil sa impact o lakas ng tama ay magtalsikang lahat ang mga pasahero.

Senator Sotto. Ginoong Pangulo, mahirap pong magtalo kung tungkol sa dyipni ang pag-uusapan. Hindi po kami makikipagtalo. Ang komite ay hindi makikipagtalo pagdating sa dyipni sapagkat talo tayo riyan. Hindi po puwedeng i-seat belt ang mga pasahero sa likod ng dyipni kahit ano pa ang gawin natin. Una, ilan ang isasakay natin? Anim, walo, pito, sampu? Hindi natin puwedeng lagyan kung ilang seat belts.

Kung minsan, walo na iyong nakaupo—ipinipilit pang gawing siyam. Kung may pitong seat belts lamang iyan, malamang mag-agawan o mag-away pa. Hindi po talaga maaari as far as the jeepney is concerned. Surrender po kami riyan. Ang komite po ay nag-give up na riyan. At iyan ang naging kasunduan doon sa mga jeepney drivers and operators associations.

Pagdating naman po roon sa mga kotse, puwede iyong sinasabi ninyo na kailangang lagyan din iyong sa likod. Ngunit ang sinasabi naman namin, dahil ito ay inuumpisahan pa lamang natin, nanganganay pa lamang tayo—ganito rin nag-umpisa ang ibang bayan na kung saan ay sa harap muna naglagay ng seat belt—sa kalaunan ay saka natin lalahatin.

During the period of amendments, kung sa tingin ng Gino—ganito rin ang sinasabi ni Senador Barbers—ay kailangang isama na iyon likuran, maaaring pag-usapan ito ng mga awtor na isaalang-alang at tanggapin iyang sinasabi ninyo.

Senator Revilla. Sa madaling salita, Ginoong Pangulo, hindi 100 percent safe ang mga pasahero ng dyipni?

Senator Sotto. Hindi po talaga. Kaya lamang, mas safe iyong mga pasahero ng dyipni kung iyong tsuper ay naka seat belt. Dahil hindi siya mawawala sa posisyon at kontrolado niya ang sasakyan kung sakali mang mabunggo o malubak ito nang matindi.

Senator Revilla. Hanggang dito na lamang po ang mga itatanong ko. In closing, Mr. President, I would like to thank the distinguished sponsor of this measure for his patience and generosity in enlightening this humble representation on this laudable measure.

Maraming salamat po.

Senator Sotto. Maraming salamat din po, Ginoong Pangulo.

Senator Revilla. And I would like to manifest that during the period of amendments I will be introducing some amendments to this praiseworthy legislative measure.

May I also manifest that I would like to be a coauthor of this very important piece of legislation. Thank you.

**MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR SOTTO
(Senators Guingona and Revilla as
Coauthors of S. No. 1137)**

Senator Sotto. Mr. President, may I manifest that Senator Guingona and Senator Revilla be made coauthors of Senate Bill No. 1137.

The President. It is duly noted. The Majority Leader is recognized.

Senator Drilon. Mr. President, Senator Santiago also manifested her desire to interpellate. However, she is not in the Session Hall.

I therefore move that we close the period of interpellations.

Senator Roco. Mr. President, may I be allowed to ask just two or three questions? There were so many senators who already asked some questions, and we might feel neglected if we do not ask some questions.

Senator Drilon. I withdraw my motion, Mr. President.

The President. Senator Roco is recognized for interpellation.

Senator Roco. Thank you, Mr. President. I have some small problems with the bill. It seems to me, while listening to all the discussions, that the new cars, obviously all of them, have seat belts. The only ones really affected are the jeepneys, which our distinguished colleague has already expressed on, and maybe the bus. The two of them.

Effectively, this bill compels the jeepney owners and the bus operators to spend money. Is that correct, Mr. President?

Senator Sotto. For the old vehicles, yes, Mr. President. But there is a slight correction. Iyong pong mga tsuper ng bus, according to the operators when they attended the public hearing, most of the drivers, a great majority of them have seat belts already.

Senator Roco. So the only ones being compelled to spend are the owners of the jeepney. Is this correct, Mr. President?

Senator Sotto. Yes, Mr. President, for the old jeepneys.

Senator Roco. If that is so, Mr. President, then this is in the nature of a tax, because if one has an old or a new jeepney, he is now compelled to spend. But if that is in the nature of a tax, then it should begin with the House of Representatives and not with us.

Senator Sotto. I do not think so, Mr. President. We do not concur. Definitely this is more on a safety measure aspect. We do not look at it that way.

The point being raised by the distinguished gentleman from Bicol is quite indirect. That is how we look at it.

Senator Roco. Even granting it may not be in the form of a tax, why do we want to pass a bill that compels the poorer sector to spend when we have an administration that is supposed to help the *mahirap*?

Senator Sotto. Again, I disagree, Mr. President. Bihira po sa mga jeepney operators at owners ang mahirap. Iyong jeepney driver ang mahirap. Pero hindi iyong jeepney driver ang maglalagay ng seat belt Kundi yung may-ari ng sasakyan. And it is only P300. They have one year to install it. Puwede nilang hulugan yong P300 sa loob ng isang taon. Mura lamang iyon. Divided by 12 months, medyo magaan-gaan na iyon. Ang maglalagay ay yong jeepney operator at yong owner ng jeep.

Senator Roco. Hindi po sa gaan o sa bigat kundi sa prinsipyo na pinupwersa natin ang mamamayan na gumasta. Ang sabi naman nila ay pagkakaroon daw ng emergency economic powers dahil hirap na hirap ang bayan.

But in any event, the other policy issue that is bothersome is, may nalalaman ba ang kagalanggalang na isponsor na hindi pa alam sa bayan nating sawi na kapag gumamit tayo ng safety belt ay makakatulong ito?

Senator Sotto. Let me answer the first point.

Mr. President, to bolster my disagreement with the *gastos* issue as far as the jeepney operators, jeepney owners and even the drivers are concerned, alam ninyo, gumagasta itong mga jeepney driver ng libu-libo para sa mga borloloy na nakakabit sa dyip nila.

Bilangin ninyo. Labinlima ang antenna ngunit wala namang umaandar ni isa. Ang isang antenna ay nagkakahalaga ng P750. Itong seat belt na para sa kaligtasan nila ay P300 lamang. Palagay ko ay hindi magiging problema ang parteng iyon. May mga dekorasyong kabayo sa harap ng mga sasakyan nila. May silver, may gold at kung anu-ano pang palamuti. Ang mahal noon. They can spend for those ornaments. Itong seat belt ay maganda ring adorno.

Mr. President, as far as the information campaign is concerned, the info campaign will be centered on "Buckle up" or "Maghibilya o gumamit ka." Alam nating mahusay ang seat belt, pero may pagka-machismo tayo, Ayaw nating malukot ang ating damit. May ganoong ugali ang mga Pilipino. "Malulukot ang damit ko." Naiinis tayo na baka malukot ang damit natin. "You are crumpled for two hours." Nasasabi natin iyan sapagkat hindi pa natin nasusubok na ma-cast ng isang buwan.

Kung nabunggo at nabalian kayo, pagkatapos ay na-cast

kayo ng isang buwan, mas mahirap iyon kaysa naka-seat belt kayo ng dalawang oras sa biyahe.

The information campaign is to create awareness, upang kumbinsihin sila. Alam nila na ang seat belt ay mabisa o effective, pero iba iyong kukumbinsihin sila na, "Isuot ninyo iyan."

Another information that surprised me: Ang buong akala ko iyong seat belt is only used for safety, pero iyon pala ay para pigilan kayo nang hindi kayo tumalsik. Iyon pala, it is also used for prevention.

Nalaman ko lamang ito noong mag-hearing na. I have been driving for so many years, probably the last 32 years. I still drive up to now. It is only now that I found out na kapag naka-seat belt tayo,—I did not realize that—na kapag nalubak o nabangga tayo, ang mas malala pala ay iyong pagtama ng ating sasakyan nang hindi natin hawak iyong manibela at hindi natin naabot ang preno dahil napausog tayo ng malayo sa upuan. Especially in the jeep. Ang mga upholstery na ginagamit sa upuan ng mga dyip ay madulas. Kaya kahit na maong o iba pang uri ng pantalon ang inyong suot, dumudulas iyon sa upholstery. Sa kaunting lubak lamang ay napapausog na tayo sa upuan ng sasakyan.

I think we should give this kind of information to our countrymen, Mr. President. Naniniwala kami na kailangang magkaroon ng ganoong information campaign.

Senator Roco. I have no dispute with the information campaign, Mr. President. In fact, that is not the point I was leading to. But we are always saying that the value of free market, the value of peoples participation is, it is self-responsibility that is critical even for good citizenship. It is people who are responsible for themselves. That is important.

This law assumes na iyong taong magsusuot ng seat belt ay malulukot ang damit. Magpasensiya na raw dahil iyon ang macho concept ng Filipino. So that suggests the lack of self-imposed responsibility.

The law again tries to make the people act as though they are wards. Maaaring hindi nila naiisip iyan kung kaya gagawa tayo ng batas para obligahin silang gumamit ng safety belt. Baka nga naman itong mga mamamayan natin ay hindi iniisip ang kanilang kaligtasan or they do not worry about themselves.

It seems to me, Mr. President, it is better to just inculcate the sense of responsibility, because I do not think the Senate can take care of them more than they can take care of themselves.

Is it the philosophy of the law, Mr. President, that we will feel more responsible when the persons themselves, under the assumption of the bill, are not responsible for their safety? Should

we not just develop a bigger sense of responsibility and concern for themselves and for their neighbor? Should that not be the solution instead of forcing people, kahit ayaw nila? Kung, psychologically gusto noong mga tsuper na may nakikitang silver na kabayo sa harap ng sasakyan para maging mahusay ang pagmamaheno nila, kunsuwelo na nila iyon. That is their choice. So we should leave them because that is the essence of responsible citizenship.

But this law or the bill presupposes the reverse; presupposes people who are irresponsible, and that we know what is better for them.

Senator Sotto. No, Mr. President. It is not that we know what is better for them. But there are many aspects to this like, for example, iyon pong mga kabataan. We are responsible for ourselves. Kung ayaw nating mag-seat belt, it is our liberty to do so. Ngunit paano na iyong batang nasa tabi ninyo na dahil sa tigang ng ulo ay ayaw magsuot ng seat belt? Okay na rin sa kaniya kung mabunggo o maumpog ako sa kaniya, o mamatay kami.

Also, if we look at it that way, we should probably review also the laws in all the other countries in the world. Bakit ang Pilipinas lamang ang hindi dapat magkaroon ng ganitong batas? Kailangan nang isabatas ito. Sapagkat sa ibang bayan, 70 percent of the people use the seat belt. Nagsi-seat belt ang mga tao para hindi sila mamultahan. It is for their own good.

Hindi naman sa nagmamagaling tayo o nagmamarunungmarunungan kung kaya tinuturuan natin sila ng ganito. Hindi naman ganoon. Ngunit ito ang kinakailangan sa panahong ito.

Senator Roco. Ginoong Pangulo, nang hindi ako makuha sa tingin ng Majority Leader, ang ginawa nito ay tumindig at pinuntahan ako. Kaya ako po ay hihinto na.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I just raised the questions out of a sense of participation.

Senator Sotto. Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to thank Senator Roco. I was almost tempted to use the Neptali Gonzales defense, but I restrained myself.

The President. The Majority Leader is recognized.

Senator Drilon. Mr. President, as we earlier manifested, Senator Santiago also reserved her right to interpellate. However, she is not in the hall right now.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF S. NO. 1137

Without prejudice to the privilege of Senator Santiago to

reopen the period of interpellations, I move to close the period of interpellations on Senate Bill No. 1137, as reported out under Committee Report No. 3.

The President. There is a motion to close the period of interpellations on Senate Bill No. 1137, as reported out under Committee Report No. 3, without prejudice to reopening the same upon the request of Senator Santiago.

Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, the motion is hereby approved.

BILL ON SECOND READING S. No. 1136 - Amending RA No. 7916 or the Special Economic Zone Act of 1995 *(Continuation)*

Senator Drilon. Mr. President, I move that we resume consideration of Senate Bill No. 1136, as reported out under Committee Report No. 2.

The President. Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, resumption of consideration of Senate Bill No. 1136 is now in order.

Senator Drilon. We are now in the period of individual amendments. I ask that Senator Osmeña III be recognized.

Mr. President, before we adjourned yesterday, it was Senator Roco who was on the floor proposing his individual amendments. May I also ask that Senator Roco be recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

The President. If there is no objection, the Chair would like to declare a one-minute recess. *[There was none.]*

It was 5:47 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:49 p.m., the session was resumed.

The President. The session is resumed. Senator Roco and Senator Osmeña III are recognized.

Senator Roco. Mr. President, this has been discussed with the distinguished sponsor. As I understood from the Majority Leader and the distinguished sponsor, we will avoid amending the definitions. Is this correct?

Senator Osmeña III. That is correct, Mr. President.