

**Presidential Communications Operations Office  
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF  
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE  
DURING THE CEREMONIAL SIGNING OF THE BUREAU OF FIRE  
PROTECTION MODERNIZATION ACT AND PRESENTATION OF NEWLY  
ENACTED LAWS ON VARIOUS STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES**

[Delivered at the Rizal Hall, Malacañan Palace, Manila | 10 September 2021]

Kindly sit down.

Hindi ho ako pari. I do not say mass. Do not --- just stay where you are.

House Speaker Lord Allan Velasco; Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea; Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año; Commission on Higher Education Chairperson Prospero De Vera III; Senator Bong Go; Senator Cynthia Villar; Senator Maria Imelda Marcos; House of Representatives Majority Floor Leader Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, sir; Occidental Mindoro Lone District Representative Josephine Ramirez-Sato, ma'am, maayong hapon, maayong gabii; Camarines Sur 2<sup>nd</sup> District Representative Luis Raymund Villafuerte Jr., sir; Democratic Independent Workers Association Party-list Representative Michael Edgar Aglipay, sir.

Let me convey...

*[Aide: Sir, sorry, sir, nalaktawan nimo, sir, si Senator Dela Rosa.]* Ah si... *[Aide: Tapos naa pay next pages, sir.]* Kadaghan ba diay nila. *(Madami pa pala sila.)*

Senator Ronald Dela Rosa; Masbate District Representative Narciso Bravo Jr.; Anti-Crime and Terrorism [Community] Involvement and Support Party-list Representative Eric Yap; Acting Presidential Adviser on Legislative Affairs Secretary Luzverfeda Pascual --- mahirapan ako mag...

Fire Chief Director Louie [Puracan], sir; former Fire Chief Director Jose Embang Jr., sir; University of Abra President Dr. Gregorio Turqueza, sir; Davao de Oro State College President Dr. Christie Jean Ganiera, ma'am; North Eastern Mindanao State University Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Ramel Tomaquin, sir; Southeast Asian University of Technology President Dr. Alex Navarroza, sir; Agusan del Sur State University President Dr. Joy

Capistrano, ma'am; Occidental Mindoro State University Institutional Quality Assurance Director Riza Reyteran, ma'am; my fellow workers in government.

Let me convey my appreciation to Congress for their determination to realize the legislative priorities of this administration, all of which are ultimately geared towards bringing prosperous and comfortable lives for Filipinos.

Let me express, as well, my confidence in your thorough and judicious deliberation and discernment on these legislative measures.

The signing of the BFP Modernization Act and the presentation of the newly enacted laws on various state universities and colleges is a testament to the strong cooperation between Congress and this administration in providing our people with equitable and responsive service, especially in areas of public safety and higher education.

As part of our commitment to strengthen higher education institutions and improve access to tertiary education, I signed six laws covering various state universities and colleges in the country. These include the conversion of public higher education institutions into state universities, thereby providing our students with advanced professional instruction and training and a more conducive learning environment, especially [for those] living in far-flung areas.

I look forward to witnessing the state universities and college to produce our future generation the leaders and professionals of our country.

To all our students, let me assure you of this administration's continuing commitment in advancing initiatives that will enable you to excel in your chosen fields of study and reach your full potential.

It is also this administration's goal to build safer and peaceful communities. To this end, the Bureau of Fire Protection has been instrumental in the success of our collective efforts to provide rescue and relief operations in areas hit by destructive fires and calamities.

I am therefore confident that the passage of the [BFP] Modernization Act will help boost the morale, efficiency, responsiveness and professionalism of the BFP in realizing their mandate.

Under this law, the BFP will embark on a 10-year modernization period transforming it into a modern and world-class institution. This will consistently guarantee our safety and become the source of pride.

It is my hope that this milestone will further inspire the men and women of the BFP to hone their skills and expertise in the areas of fire prevention and suppression, as well as emergency medical response and disaster preparedness and resilience.

Let me emphasize that our people eagerly await the fruits of these people-centered and reform-oriented laws, and hope that they will feel their benefits soon.

On this note, I call on all concerned government agencies to ensure the full, inclusive, and efficient implementation of the newly enacted and existing laws.

I ask my [fellow] Filipinos for your continued trust and cooperation with the government as we pursue a brighter and more progressive future for the entire nation.

Before I end my --- let me just --- mag-segue lang ako nang kaunti at itong... In the mind of some, bakit mo bigyan ng baril ang mga bumbero eh sunog lang ang kalaban niyan? You know, the organization itself and the individual bumbero they are exposed to a fraught of so many dangers. One is that you die while fighting the fire. The second one is you have to...

Kasi itong baril it was hotly contested in Congress, bakit bigyan ng baril? Ganito kasi `yan, well, for those of you na kagaya ko dumaan ng local government, alam ninyo `yan. Not so much in the provinces `yung maliliit but ito `yung malaking siyudad and with the blighted areas all around.

Alam mo minsan kung sunog dikit-dikit kasi `yung --- eh may --- may daan `yan. Initially the road is well paved and it is of the required width na para makapasok ang mga sakyanan at preferably `yung mga truck. Ang problema nito pahabaan na ngayon ng hose kasi hindi talaga makapasok because `yung anong kaliit --- the roads are getting narrower and narrower everyday. Kanya-kanyang istilo diyan eh.

Ang problema, `pag may sunog, lahat ng tao gusto unahin `yung --- especially if it's a conflagration that is really a big one --- gusto nila unahin `yung lugar nila. At `pag hindi, magalit. Either they threaten the bumberos who are helpless because while fighting the fire they have to also address the challenges dito sa kanila nagagalit. Nagdala ng itak, minsan magpaputok ng baril. So they have this...

Ang pulis hindi `yan pumapasok doon sa ano mismo, doon sa area ng saan na `yung sunog. Iyong pulis nasa labas `yan, they maintain the traffic. But seldom do they participate in the --- in the midst of putting out the fire.

Iyong iba pinuputol --- sa galit, pinuputol `yung hose. So there are so many challenges in the work of a bumbero in the day of his life na kailangan mo protektahan. So we thought of just providing the --- sana `yung mga baril. Kung hindi lahat, well, that is for the wisdom of Congress, we will bow to it.

But `yung mayroong --- bigyan lang sila kaunting may --- a unit whose function would really be just to ward off threats and destruction of government properties. Hirap sila kung wala eh, tinatakot sila. Eh `yung iba naman may mga pulis diyan na mismo nakatira sa squatter's area tapos tinatakot `yung kapwa niya taga-gobyerno. Iyang things like that.

So para naman medyo buo ang loob ng bumbero, `yan ang... We thought of just arming them also. Tatalagay gobyerno `to and they can be called upon during emergencies to contribute to the law and order of the place, but they have to have something.

Ano, ang semblance kasi dito ng --- in the Philippines, it's sad to say it, but ang ano dito is symbol ng ano is baril. Kung hindi ka makakita ng baril, hindi susunod. That is the reason why one of the things that --- `yung sa modernization nakasali `yun. And I talk about it only because it was a very hotly contested issue in Congress.

Again, I would like to thank your presence here in this evening and may you realize your dream of building your institutions to greater heights.

Maraming salamat. *[applause]*

Alam mo, there's no telling `yung ano ha, `yung COVID even with all the protections na ano. May mga kilala ako na talagang they protect themselves with --- halos maligo na lang ng alcohol eh. *[laughter]*

Pero just be careful kasi talagang marami na akong nakilala na namatay. Sa probinsiya ko, mga kababata ko nauubos na. Sa klase ko sa Grade 2, ako na lang naiwan. So patay na lahat.

Be careful really. This COVID is a --- p\*\*\*, that is the... Iyan ang binigay ng --- I don't know if it's God. Iyan ang binigay ng ano ng... Every generation has a calamity like this but ito it will stay. It is how you live with it. It will be here for the longest time so learn to live with it and please take care.

Salamat. *[applause]*

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