

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE**  
**News and Information Bureau**

**PRESS BRIEFING OF MS. DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ**  
**WITH LEGISLATIVE-EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (LEDAC)**  
**September 25, 2024**

**MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ:** [COVERAGE CUT] ... Escudero and the Honorable Speaker of House of Representatives Martin Romualdez to give us their insights from today's LEDAC meeting with *[technical problem]*

**SENATE PRES. ESCUDERO:** ... in the Senate. We expect an additional five of these bills to be finished and enacted on the part of the Senate and the House before the year ends and before we go on our Christmas break.

When we resume, we expect to be able to pass on part of the Senate, about three to five more of these measures, totaling therefore an additional 13 before we go on formal break and end the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress.

**MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ:** Thank you, Senate President. And now we shall hear from the Honorable Speaker Martin Romualdez on the next steps and the salient points from today's meeting with the President.

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** On behalf of the House of Representatives, we are very, very pleased to announce that we have reported to the President and to the LEDAC that, again, the House of Representatives has accomplished all but two of the priority legislative measures, labelled as priority. And we are confident that before the year ends, we shall have finished all by December or six months in advance.

We are most delighted under the new Senate leadership that we even have a more dynamic and proactive Senate, and we are most appreciative to the Senate President for the output of the local bills that the Senate has generated for and in behalf of our congressmen.

We know that the Senate has a lot, still, to accomplish but we are very, very happy to see the progress and much more efficient manner in which the priority legislation for our congressmen, the local bills, as well as national are being undertaken. And we praise the Senate for this new development. And we are one with the Senate in fulfilling the legislative priority agenda of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

**SENATE PRES. ESCUDERO:** For the information of the Speaker, given that it was not discussed earlier, the Senate has passed 79 local bills. And we have run out of local bills to take up on the floor so we will be pushing the committees of the Senate to ramp up the filing of committee reports so that we can continue to take up these local bills and approve them until third reading.

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** Again, we are one with the Senate. And again, we express our appreciation and support for the senate leadership under Senate President Chiz Escudero in fulfilling these hopes and wishes of our legislators on the local front, and now also more especially that even national bills have been passed and are waiting for enactment into law. And again, we thank Senator Chiz Escudero for his leadership.

**MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ:** Thank you. I believe we're open to questions now. May we open the floor? Okay, let's start with Leth Narciso, DZRH.

**LETH NARCISO/DZRH:** Sir, iyong sa Senate ho, lima iyong natitira. Ano po iyong lima na iyon, at iyong sa House, iyong dalawa?

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** On the part of the House, we just have the Foreign Investors' Long-Term Lease Amendments, and the amendments to the agrarian law which, again, I'm glad that Senator Chiz Escudero brought up some clarificatory issues that have been ironed out at the LEDAC. And we are looking forward to its progress and, well, soon to be passage at least on the part of the House.

**SENATE PRES. ESCUDERO:** It will be the same, with respect to those two bills, but in addition would be the UHC Law Amendments, the EPIRA Law Amendments, and the New Department of Water Bill which has been approved in the House but has not yet been approved by the Senate; awaiting completion of a reconciled version emanating from the Executive branch.

**MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ:** Next question, Eden Santos, NET25.

**EDEN SANTOS/NET25:** Good morning po, Speaker and Senate President. Regarding lang po doon sa budget na panawagan po ni PBBM na mapasa po on time? Siyempre hindi naman po mapupondohan itong mga bills na ito kung wala po iyong ating 2025 national budget.

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** Maraming salamat. If I may, SP. Mamaya pong kaunti kasi kahapon po lang nakatanggap ng certification of urgency iyong bill natin na maging RA iyong House Bill 10800 or the Fiscal Budget of 2025 of the administration. Mamayang gabi po maipapasa natin po iyan on third and final reading and ready for transmission in short order to the Senate, kaya ito ang pinakaimportanteng batas na iniharap natin po sa Kongreso. At mataas iyong kumpiyansa ko na ito ay matatapos natin nitong gabi dahil sa pagka-certify ng Malacañang. Urgent po itong batas na ito po kaya that will be done.

**SENATE PRES. ESCUDERO:** Halos kasabay ng Kamara kami nagsimula ng mga pagdinig kaugnay sa iba't ibang departamento para sa kanilang GAA sa darating na taon at inaantabayanan namin ang pagbigay sa amin ng approved version ng tinatawag nating GAB o General Appropriations Bill galing sa Kamara upang magsimula na ang talakayan kaugnay ng 2025 budget sa plenaryo ng Senado.

Sa ngayon, on schedule ang mga pagdinig sa komite ng Senado at inaasahan namin na ito ay maaaprubahan nang may sapat na panahon para ito ay mabasa at ma-review ng Pangulo kaugnay ng mga line item veto na maaari niyang gawin sa panukalang budget upang maging ganap na batas ito bago matapos ang taon.

**MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ:** Next question is Chona Yu, People's Journal.

**CHONA YU/PEOPLE'S JOURNAL:** Mr. Speaker, speaking of budget, what will happen to the budget of the Office of the Vice President?

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** Sa ngayon po, we are on our last day for plenary sessions at saka inaabangan natin ang OVP. Sa ngayon yata hindi pa yata siya sumipot pero itsi-checkup ko

pagbalik ko sa Kongreso. Actually, dapat nandoon ako ngayon pero nandito tayo pero hihintayin din natin iyong representatives or si VP mismo.

**CHONA YU/PEOPLE'S JOURNAL:** Sir, what will happen kapag hindi siya dumating? What will happen po hindi siya dumating si Vice President?

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** Abangan ang susunod na kabanata. Pero hindi! Sa totoo lang po we will take this matter up shortly and you will soon be informed of its resolution po.

**CHONA YU/PEOPLE'S JOURNAL:** Thank you, sir.

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** Salamat.

**MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ:** Racquel Bayan, Radyo Pilipinas.

**RACQUEL BAYAN/RADYO PILIPINAS:** Sir, with the certification of the budget bill as urgent, ano pa po kaya ang ibang challenges na nakikita natin that can hinder iyong on time na passage ng budget bill?

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** Wala naman pong challenge. This will allow us kasi—we're all set and scheduled to pass it on second reading tonight but the certification of urgency allows us to similarly pass it within short order today at third reading.

So, handa na kami na ipasa itong GAB natin for transmission to the Senate within short order, so mamayang gabi tapos na ito.

**RACQUEL BAYAN/RADYO PILIPINAS:** Sir, can we expect that before Christmas maa-approve na po ni Pangulong Marcos iyong budget kung on time naman po iyong ..?

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** Opo, iyon po talaga. Ang hangarin na po natin ay para mayroong maligayang Pasko hindi lang para sa Pangulo, sa administrasyon pero sa taumbayan na mayroon tayong isang national budget for progress, prosperity and development para sa buong sambayanang Pilipinas.

**MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ:** Pia Gutierrez, ABS-CBN.

**PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN:** Hi, sir. Sir, speaking of the OVP's budget, can we get your comment or reaction on the VP's decision to repeatedly snob iyong plenary debates and would this lead to any delays in the passage of the budget?

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** Well, we'd like to very much see the Vice President but she selected to absent herself and she has sent us letters explaining why, but of course we would most appreciate her presence.

**MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ:** Ivan Mayrina, GMA 7.

**IVAN MAYRINA/GMA 7:** Sorry, again about the Vice President. Like she said she has repeatedly chose to snub the hearings of the budget and as a result, some members of the House are saying that if she does not want to fulfill her duties as vice president they can call for her just to give up the post or just resign. What are your thoughts in this, Speaker?

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** Well, lahat ng mga congressman may ideas, mayroon silang mga opinyon but before tonight ends we will come to a resolution and that will be the act of the plenary. So, instead of listening to individual opinions or comments, as you know, in Congress we act in the consensus as a consensus body and as a collegiate body rather and so we will deal with that as soon as you allow us to leave this presscon so we can return back to normal programming.

But we are very, very delighted to this opportunity, maraming salamat sa pagbibigay natin ng ulat sa magandang ugnayan diyan sa LEDAC kanina po, kasama natin ang mahal na President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.

**MAYRINA/GMA7:** Of course, these are priority measures you discussed at the LEDAC meeting this morning. Ano po kaya ang puwede ninyong mai-share sa taumbayan, kung ano sa mga priority measures na ito ang top of the list, kumbaga priority of priorities?

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** Well, obviously, the number one is still the national budget. That is the mother of all legislations where all the initiatives, programs and well, how the economy will be reinvigorated or to, I mean, into forward for everyone's benefit. Concomitant to that are other legislations that we have a whole gamut of them, I do not know where to begin eh, kasi may 64 dito, pero I find them almost equally important. But I passed just about all, so I don't know where to begin, other than the fact, like in giving you the 64 that are priority legislation.

I will maybe defer to the Senate President because some of the senators like to say that they are more deliberate on these, baka they have something more, well they prioritized some of the legislation that in our case, we have taken them as a whole. And we have already reported, we have passed this way, way in advance of schedule taking it as a whole bundle kasi mas marami rin tayong makaka-deliberate, since tatlongdaan kami.

Kaya, we can actually, kaya nating tutukan talaga. Pero the Senate maybe a more deliberate in its actions because they only have 24 senators to work on it, but we always defer and actually, in practice, we usually concur with the senate versions on matters and in order of priorities. So, I think, I will defer for this moment to the Senate President on what he determines or what he feels are top priorities.

**SENATE PRES. ESCUDERO:** The list of priority measures approved by LEDAC was actually an accumulation of both proposed legislation coming not only from the Executive, but also members of the Senate and Congress. So, these are the priorities of both Congress and the Executive. And the Speaker is correct, we are only—we are supposed to be 24, now only 23 so we have less people doing the same job that 300 members of Congress are doing. In fact, every member of the Senate has more than two committees to chair. Some members even chair as many as four committees. So, given time in motion studies and given human limitations, we simply cannot do it as fast as the House does it, given available manpower to the Senate and to members of the Senate.

But all of these are considered priorities that is why we were able to proceed with respect to these bills, 12 of them in fact, 25 enacted into law, 7 ready for the signature of the President. In a span of 26 session days, minus pa iyong baha at pag-ulan na kinaharap natin nitong nagdaang mga buwan, so we have about 41 remaining session days until the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress ends. We hope to be able to maximize it, by way of passing most of these laws, including the advocacies on the local level of our friends and colleagues in the House, as well as those from members of the Senate.

**YOSORES/RADYO 630:** To SP Chiz po. How can we assure the public po that the budget will be passed sa tamang timeline po sa Senate plenary given na may mga upcoming pa pong malalaking hearing din sa Senate, like iyong case po ni Pastor Quiboloy?

**SENATE PRES. ESCUDERO:** I turned the question back to you: Has it ever not been passed by the Senate on time, regardless of which year? It has always been passed by the Senate in time before we go on recess. But to address your question directly, the Senate has entered into a G to G agreement with the PICC whereby we were able to add or get five rooms because we only have six in the Senate to enable members of the Senate sharing the various committees to be able to do their respective hearings without the affecting the budget process that we are currently undertaking.

**MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ:** Any final word, this is quite historic to have both the Speaker and the Senate President here. Any final words, sirs?

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** Again, we welcome the leadership of Senate President Chiz Escudero leading the Senate, making it an even more dynamic institution and one that has established more cohesion and coordination with the House, thus having optimum output right now in terms of legislation both at the national and local levels. So, we look forward to working further with our colleagues in Congress and the Senate level under the leadership of Senator Chiz Escudero, in pursuit of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., priority legislative agenda. Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat.

**SENATE PRES. ESCUDERO:** Likewise, we thank the Speaker for his hard work for our country and we thanked the Speaker likewise for his leadership in so far as paving the way for smoother and better relations between the Senate and the House, which has resulted in the passage of many pieces of legislation, whether part of the priority or LEDAC measures or simply national bills and local bills that have equal importance in their respective districts and constituencies it will be able to help and serve.

As I was mentioning earlier, for example, we need to still pass the extension of the IBC 13 charter, we still need to pass the NHA charter renewal. We need to pass the PSALM charter renewal because all of these will be lapsing by next year.

So, although not included in the priority list of legislation, these are important bills nevertheless, that needs congressional action. Again, thank you and good morning.

**MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ:** Thank you so much, Senate President Escudero and Speaker Romualdez. At maraming salamat, Malacañang Press Corps. This concludes our press briefing. Thank you.

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