A Joint Call for Congress to Pass a Transparent and Accountable 2027 National Budget

October 29, 2026

We call on the leaders of both Houses of Congress - Senate President Sherwin Gatchalian, House Speaker Faustino Dy III, Senate Finance Committee Chair Joseph Victor Ejercito, and House Appropriations Committee Chair Mikaela Angela Suansing - to remove from the proposed P7.2 Trillion 2027 national budget every congressional insertion that has no technical basis.

The House General Appropriations Bill (HB 10858), approved on third reading earlier this month by a vote of 281-13, added more than P180 Billion (B) in Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) allocations through the Budget Amendments and Review Subcommittee (BARSc). Independent budget watchdogs report that these additions cover at least 6,000 projects, raising the DPWH project count in the National Expenditure Program (NEP) to at least 16,000. Many appear as lump sums for multi-purpose buildings and access and bypass roads, without published project lists or named proponents.

These additions were reportedly funded in part by cutting about P130B from foreign-assisted projects, P9.5B from calamity funds, P1.76B from the EDSA Busway, and P4.9B from health programs. We find this deeply troubling. Foreign-assisted projects are the country's most rigorously prepared infrastructure - backed by feasibility studies, financing commitments, and international procurement standards. Cutting them delays the high-impact projects that lower logistics costs and attract investments. Raiding calamity funds in a country that is exposed to disasters is indefensible.

The Filipino people have already paid dearly for this practice. Insertions in the 2023 to 2025 budgets were linked to ghost and substandard flood control projects that betrayed public trust, wasted scarce resources, and left communities exposed to floods. The 2027 budget must not repeat that history.

We therefore urge Congress to:

1. **Remove every insertion that lacks technical basis.** An item should stay only if it is backed by a feasibility study or detailed engineering design, is consistent with the implementing agency's master plans, and was validated by that agency as ready for implementation in 2027.

2. **Restore the funds taken from foreign-assisted projects, calamity funds, EDSA Busway and health programs** to the levels proposed in the NEP, unless Congress can publicly justify each reduction.

3. **Strike special provisions that allow agencies to modify or replace projects** after enactment. Such provisions turn the approved budget into a blank check.

4. **Publish every amendment in full** - project, location, amount, source of funds, justification, and the legislator who proposed it - before the Senate votes on second reading and before the bicameral conference begins.

5. **Admit no new items at the Bicameral Conference Committee.** The bicameral report must reconcile only what each chamber has already approved, contain no blank or lump-sum entries, and be deliberated in fully livestreamed sessions.

We welcome the commitments made by Senate President Gatchalian and Senator Ejercito that the Senate will scrutinize the House version line by line and will not accept last-minute insertions. We likewise acknowledge Speaker Dy's pledge of an open budget process. We ask both chambers to honor these commitments in full.

Our call is not for delay. We support the timely passage of the 2027 budget and oppose a reenacted budget. A clean budget and a timely budget are not in conflict; the technical review needed to remove baseless insertions can be done within the current calendar.

Public funds are the people's money, raised from the taxes of every worker, consumer, and enterprise. Investors, at home and abroad, read the national budget as a statement of how seriously a government takes integrity and value for money. A budget free of politically driven insertions will strengthen investor confidence, protect the country's fiscal space, and ensure that every peso builds the infrastructure, schools, and health services the nation truly needs.

The business sector stands ready to work with Congress and the Executive Branch toward this goal, and will closely monitor the budget through enactment and implementation.

1. ALYANSA AGRIKULTURA
2. CEBU BUSINESS CLUB (CBC)
3. CEBU CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY (CCCI)
4. CEBU LEADS FOUNDATION
5. CONNECTED WOMEN
6. EMPLOYERS CONFEDERATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (ECOP)
7. FEDERATION OF FILIPINO-CHINESE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, INC. (FFCCCII)
8. FEDERATION OF PHILIPPINE INDUSTRIES (FPI)
9. FILIPINA CEO CIRCLE (FCC)
10. FINANCIAL EXECUTIVES INSTITUTE OF THE PHILIPPINES (FINEX)
11. FINTECH ALLIANCE.PH

12. FOUNDATION FOR ECONOMIC FREEDOM (FEF)
13. ILOILO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (ILED)
14. INSTITUTE FOR SOLIDARITY IN ASIA (ISA)
15. INSTITUTE OF CORPORATE DIRECTORS (ICD)
16. INVESTMENT HOUSE ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (IHAP)
17. JUSTICE REFORM INITIATIVE (JRI)
18. MAKATI BUSINESS CLUB (MBC)
19. MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (MAP)
20. MOVE AS ONE COALITION
21. MOVEMENT FOR RESTORATION OF PEACE & ORDER (MRPO)
22. NEXTGEN ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN CORPORATE DIRECTORS (NOWCD)
23. PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE VOTING (PPCRV)
24. PEOPLE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (PMAP)
25. PHILIPPINE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (PCCI)
26. PHILIPPINE ENERGY EFFICIENCY ALLIANCE (PE2)
27. PHILIPPINE EXPORTERS CONFEDERATION (PHILEXPORT)
28. PHILIPPINE FINANCIAL & INTER-INDUSTRY PRIDE (PFIP)
29. PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS (PICPA)
30. PHILIPPINE RETAILERS ASSOCIATION (PRA)
31. PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY INSTITUTE OF ASIA (PASIA)
32. ROUNDTABLE FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT (RFID)
33. SHAREHOLDERS' ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (SharePHIL)
34. THE OUTSTANDING WOMEN IN THE NATION'S SERVICE (TOWNS) FOUNDATION
35. WOMEN BUSINESS COUNCIL PHILIPPINES (WomenBizPH)