

EXPLANATION OF VOTE  
"ENOUGH OF EXCUSES!"  
ON RESETTING THE SYNCHRONIZED BARANGAY AND SK ELECTIONS  
House Bill 2417  
REP. LORENZO R. TAÑADA III  
17 September 2007

Mr. Speaker,

I vote against this measure for the following reasons:

*First*, the Commission on Elections openly said that they are ready to administer the forthcoming October 2007 barangay elections.

*Second*, even if the COMELEC has covertly lobbied for a postponement, and local officials have overtly lobbied for the same, we have actually deprived and we shall again be depriving our electorate their right to choose the very leaders that directly serve them. The Institute for Political and Electoral Reforms has succinctly put it - "the first postponement of barangay elections in 2005 had already given sitting barangay and SK officials two years of 'unmandated' leadership and another postponement would only extend the 'credulity' of their mandate even more."

*Third*, that we should use the barangay election as a guinea pig for election automation in preparation for the "real thing" in 2010 smacks of hypocrisy to say the least. We could very well be saying, *pag-praktisan ng COMELEC ang automated elections sa barangay* as if barangay elections are not as important as Presidential elections.

Third, that lack of funds, not by COMELEC, but by those who would bankroll the campaigns of barangay captains and sangguniang kabataan should actually be a strong reason why the October barangay elections should not be postponed. At least, somehow, **performance** and not money politics would determine the outcome of the village elections.

Fourth, I believe that this bill is unconstitutional as while the legislature can fix the term of local officials it cannot extend their tenure.

Mr. Speaker,

Let us start the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress by being real Representatives of our people. Let not this shameful bill blemish the very image that we are starting to rebuild for the House of Representatives.