

From reel to real

Rep. Arjo Atayde's impact on Quezon City's First District

Manila Standard · 8 Apr 2024 · A3 · By Patricia Taculao-Deligerero

REP. Juan Carlos “Arjo” C. Atayde, a firsttime public servant and legislator, has rapidly emerged as a prominent figure in Philippine politics, bringing a unique blend of youthfulness, passion, and dedication to public service. He is currently on his first term in the 19th Congress of the House of Representatives, emphasizing his commitment to providing his constituents with “Akysan Agad.”



Many Filipinos already knew Rep. Atayde before his foray into politics as a versatile actor who starred in various series and movies in the Philippines. However, his decision to transition from the silver screen to the political arena reflects his deep-seated diligence in effecting positive change in his community.

So why did he choose to venture into the world of public service? It's all thanks to his parents, actress Sylvia Sanchez and Spanish-Filipino businessman Arturo Atayde, who nurtured his philanthropic nature at an early age.

Ever since he and his siblings were young, they would visit their mother's hometown in Nasipit, Agusan del Norte, annually to hold outreach activities and help local charities. This exposure inspired Rep. Atayde to the roles of local government units in bringing joy and solutions to their communities.

On the other hand, throughout his years in the entertainment industry, Rep. Atayde leveraged his various roles and led his constituents with the sensitivity and understanding of human reality he developed by playing diverse roles.

Although tropes in the entertainment industry often portray government officials in a negative approach, the young district representative is confident that he can change this perspective and shine a positive light on public leaders like him who want nothing more than to see his fellow Filipinos prosper.

Since assuming office, the young district representative has undertaken several initiatives to address pressing issues and improve his constituents' quality of life.

One of his primary goals has been on healthcare, recognizing the importance of accessible and quality medical services for all constituents. Rep. Atayde has championed enhanced healthcare facilities, advocating for increased funding and resources to improve healthcare infrastructure and services in the district to meet modern demands at a time when people are becoming more conscious about their well-being.

Rep. Atayde spearheads district programs and projects directly benefitting the Distrito Uno community. These include the "Kusiklaban" music festival, interbarangay basketball league, "Kusina on Wheels" monthly feeding drive, and the Mobile Laboratory for health-care needs—projects that exemplify his proactive approach to community service.

His passion for public service is further evident in initiatives like Medical and Financial Assistance, which have benefited over 22,580 individuals, and successful medical missions that reached approximately 10,000 beneficiaries.

In addition to healthcare and education, Rep. Atayde has been a vocal advocate for empowering marginalized sectors, including women, children, and the LGBTQ+ community. He has actively supported legislation and policies aimed at protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of these groups, demonstrating his advocacy for inclusivity and social justice.

Rep. Atayde's approach to governance is characterized by accessibility, transparency, and responsiveness to the needs of his constituents. He has established various channels for feedback and communication, ensuring that the voices of the people are heard and their concerns are addressed. Through town hall meetings, public consultations, and community outreach programs, he has fostered greater civic engagement and participation in the decision-making process.

As a public leader, he remains firm on being a champion for the people by being the person they can turn to in times of need. Instead of drawing concern about his youth and no experience in politics before, he knows that he is among the next generation of public leaders who can set a good example to others while lobbying for the change they want to see within their respective communities. While some may misinterpret the lawmaker's compassion for naivete, he exhibits it proudly—a symbol of his strength as a young district representative.

Moreover, he also keeps his two feet planted firmly on the ground and remains humble enough to acknowledge that he still has much to learn as a district representative. Fortunately, he is more than eager to explore the complexities of the role so he can put his best foot forward in any circumstance.

Besides his resolve to bring only the best for his constituents, Rep. Atayde also uses his voice to champion other causes in the House of Representatives.

He is an active member of 17 committees, reflecting his dedication to the welfare of his constituents. Notably, he holds the position of Vice Chairman in three committees and serves as a Member in 13 others. His commitment extends to promoting inclusivity and gender equity, as evidenced by his deputization as a Member of the Committee on Women and Gender Equality.

In the meantime, Rep. Atayde's committee memberships include vital areas such as Creative Industries, Metro Manila Development, Micro, Small And Medium Enterprise Development, Appropriations, Banks And Financial Intermediaries, Bases Conversion, Games And Amusements, Housing And Urban Development, Information And Communications Technology, Land Use, Legislative Franchises, Natural Resources, Nuclear Energy, Public Works And Highways, Ways And Means, and Youth And Sports Development.

Although it may seem like he has a lot on his plate, the neophyte district representative remains optimistic about his initiatives and is always ready to respond to his constituents' needs, embodying his slogan, "Aksyon Agad."

For the 19th Congress, he was the principal author of 205 bills and coauthored 56 more. His legislative initiatives—such as the SOGIE Equality Act, Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Act, and regulations on the use of Artificial Intelligence and Automation Systems in the labor industry—showcase his dedication to addressing challenges relevant to Filipinos today.

Rep. Atayde's political achievements and efforts as the First District Representative of Quezon City reflect his unwavering dedication to serving the public interest and his commitment to building a more equitable and prosperous society for all. He may have won numerous awards for his undoubted skill on the big and small screens, but one relevant achievement he earned lately is the trust of his constituents.

With his passion, vision, and leadership, he continues to make significant strides in shaping the future of his district and the nation.