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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agrarian Reform	Substitute Bill to HBs 229 & 2177	Deputy Speaker Singson and Rep. Santos-Recto	Granting full insurance coverage to all qualified agrarian reform beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), amending for the purpose Sec. 14 of RA 9700, otherwise known as the CARP Extension with Reforms	The Committee, presided by Rep. Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano (1 st District, Ilocos Sur), approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HBs 229 and 2177.
	HB 187	Rep. Bravo	Providing for the restructuring and condonation of unpaid interests, penalties, and surcharges on loans secured by farmers, fisherfolk and agrarian reform beneficiaries from the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of Agriculture (DA), People's Credit and Finance Corporation (PCFC), Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), National Food Authority (NFA), and Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (QUEDANCOR)	The Committee approved HB 187.
Agriculture and Food	HRs 754, 821 & 917, and Privilege Speech 176	Reps. Gasataya, Suansing (H.), and Lee	Inquiry into the impact of the importation, use, and sale of high fructose corn syrup in the Philippines on the sustainability of the sugar industry	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jose Panganiban Jr. (Party-List, ANAC-IP), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HRs 754 and 821 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Reps. Greg Gasataya (Bacolod City) and Horacio Suansing Jr. (2nd District, Sultan Kudarat), authors of HRs 754 and 821, respectively, underscored the need to regulate the importation, sale, and use of high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) to protect the country's domestic sugar industry and the health of the consumers.</p> <p>HFCS is an imported alternative sweetener made from corn starch that is widely used in the production of soft drinks and in food processing.</p> <p>Rosemarie Gumera, planning officer of the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA), an agency attached to the Department of Agriculture (DA), said that SRA issued Sugar Order (SO) 3 and 3-A which provide the guidelines for the issuance of clearance for the release of imported HFCS and chemically pure fructose, following the surge of HFCS importation from 2013 up to 2016.</p>

Continuation... Agriculture and Food				<p>Asked to comment on the proposal to impose tax on HFCS, Dino Yulo, spokesperson of the Sugar Alliance of the Philippines (SAP), expressed his support to such imposition.</p> <p>Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (1st District, Surigao del Sur), suggested that a “win-win” solution be arrived at to protect both the domestic sugar industry and the other industries using HFCS, taking into consideration the Philippines’ commitments to the World Trade Organization (WTO).</p> <p>In response to the query of Reps. Maximo Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City) and Ariel “Ka Ayik” Casilao (Party-List, ANAKPAWIS) as to how the country’s sugar industry can be protected from the adverse effects of HFCS importations, Tariff Commissioner Ernesto Albano said that the Philippines may establish safeguard measures based on RA 8800 or the Safeguard Measures Act that codifies the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the WTO Agreement on Safeguards.</p>
	HR 48	Rep. Tan (A.)	Inquiry into the National Irrigation Administration’s (NIA) unfinished irrigation projects, disposition of appropriated funds, proceeds of loans and other developmental assistance, and capability to effectively address the irrigation needs of the agriculture sector	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the issues raised in HRs 48 and 247 and in the Privilege Speech in its next meeting.</p> <p>The NIA was requested to submit to the Committee the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of build-operate-transfer (BOT) agreement or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) entered into by NIA with companies involved in the construction of dams; • List of corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects of the private sector involved in NIA projects; and • Copy of NIA’s contract with First Gen Hydro Power Corporation. <p>The Committee agreed to invite NIA Administrator Ricardo Visaya and a representative from the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) to shed light on the issues raised in the measures.</p>
	HR 247 and Privilege Speech 25	Rep. Suansing (E.)	Investigation into the sale of water by CE Casecnan Water and Energy Corporation, Inc. to the NIA for purposes of irrigation to ascertain the volume of water delivery, to review the exorbitant rates of water delivery fees per cubic meter and the average annual energy generation, and to propose remedial measures thereof	
Foreign Affairs	HR 646	Rep. Bertiz	Inquiry into the persistent delays in the issuance of passports to Filipino applicants and the utilization of the passport revolving fund	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Linabelle Ruth Villarica (4th District, Bulacan), approved the Committee Report on HR 646 subject to style.</p> <p>Rep. Aniceto “John” Bertiz III (Party-List, ACTS OFW), author of HR 646, thanked the Committee for coming up with the most appropriate recommendations to solve the issue of delayed issuance of passports, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the annual budget of the DFA to allow it to establish additional regional consular offices and satellite offices;

Continuation... Foreign Affairs				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend the relevant provisions of RA 8239 or the Philippine Passport Act of 1996; • Enact a law creating a government-owned and controlled corporation (GOCC) with the sole mandate of printing Philippine passports; • Decongest the DFA's online passport system by increasing appointment slots proportional to the printing capacity of the Asian Production Organization Unit, Inc. (APO); • Augment the DFA's staff complement; and • Tap the services of local government units (LGUs) to expedite the delivery of passports.
	HR 45	Rep. Savellano	Allocating funds for the conduct of a mapping survey to identify the metes and bounds of the area, east of Luzon known as the 'Benham Rise,' which was approved by the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as part of the Philippine territory, including the marine exploration for mineral deposits which may be used as alternative source of energy and other resources that will be found therein	<p>The Committee adopted in principle HR 45 subject to style.</p> <p>Philippine Navy Captain Roy Trinidad, National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) Deputy Administrator Efren Carandang, and Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Assistant Secretary Lourdes Yparraguirre made their respective presentations on the features of the Benham Rise, as well as the various activities and challenges faced by the agencies relative to the conduct of mapping and exploration activities in the area.</p> <p>Rep. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" Mariño (5th District, Batangas) inquired whether there are already applications from private companies to conduct research on the Benham Rise.</p> <p>Yparraguirre said there were several proposals from Chinese companies, but were declined due to their refusal to comply with the requirements set by the DFA. Another proposal from Russia was also received by the DFA and is currently under review.</p> <p>As stated in HR 45, the Benham Plateau, more popularly called as Benham Rise, is a 13-million hectare undersea region that lies approximately 160 nautical miles east of Luzon and off the Provinces of Isabela and Aurora. The Philippines' claim to the region as part of the country's continental shelf was recognized and officially approved by the UNCLOS in April, 2012.</p>
	HBs 329, 3015, 3284 & 4645	Reps. Romualdo, Velarde, Villarica, and Go (A.C.)	Amending certain provisions of RA 8239, otherwise known as the Philippine Passport Act of 1996	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the four bills.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Ana Cristina Siquian Go (2nd District, Isabela).</p> <p>Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Assistant Secretary Frank Cimafranca supports the bill.</p>

<p>Good Government and Public Accountability</p>	<p>HR 882</p>	<p>Majority Leader Fariñas</p>	<p>Inquiry into the use by the Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte of its shares from the excise taxes on locally manufactured Virginia-type cigarettes or the Special Support Fund under RA 7171 for a purpose other than those provided for by the said law, in its highly irregular purchase of motor vehicles made through cash advances without the benefit of public biddings for the total amount of P66.45 million</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur), will deliberate further on the issues raised relative to HR 882 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Juan Pablo “Rimpy” Bondoc (4th District, Pampanga), co-author of HR 882, reiterated the issues raised in the resolution, particularly the purportedly highly irregular purchase of motor vehicles by the Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte amounting to P66.45 million, using its share in the proceeds of the tobacco excise taxes, in violation of RA 7171. (RA 7171 promotes the development of farmers in the Virginia tobacco-producing provinces).</p> <p>Rep. Pimentel said that liquidation of cash advances has to be done within 60 days, otherwise it should be disallowed by the Commission on Audit (COA). He was reacting to one of COA’s findings that one of Ilocos Norte’s cash advances for the purchase of 40 minicabs amounting to P18.6 million was made a year after it was made.</p> <p>Rep. Alfredo Garbin (Party-List, AKO BICOL) asked COA to explain its Memorandum Circular 97-002 relative to cash advances.</p> <p>COA Supervising Auditor III Cornelio Viernes said that cash advances can be applied for the payment of salaries and wages, allowances, honoraria, petty cash, and special cash advances. Viernes said that the cash advance for the purchase of the vehicles may be categorized under special cash advances.</p> <p>However, COA Chair Michael Aguinaldo said it could not be allowed as a special cash advance but should have been a regular disbursement.</p> <p>Rep. Pimentel also noted the absence of a public bidding for the said purchases made by the Ilocos Norte government in violation of RA 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act. He added that the Ilocos Norte Governor has no authority from the Sangguniang Panlalawigan relative to the questioned transactions in violation of the Local Government Code.</p> <p>Replying to the question of Deputy Speaker Federico Romero Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City), Aguinaldo said that on his instructions, the concerned regional director is already looking into the issue, including the shortcomings or negligence of the resident auditors.</p> <p>Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas (1st District, Ilocos Norte) asked the Land Transportation Office (LTO) if the vehicles purchased, as mentioned in his resolution, were registered with LTO.</p>
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<p>Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability</p>				<p>Atty. Teofilo Guadiz of the Office of the LTO Assistant Director in Region I revealed that not one of the said vehicles was registered with the LTO.</p> <p>Majority Fariñas also asked the alleged supplier of Foton mini trucks if there was indeed a transaction between them and the Ilocos Norte government.</p> <p>Atty. Ruby Grace Dimaano, Vice-President of the United Asia Automotive Group, Inc., denied that her company had such a transaction with Ilocos Norte or received P32.55 million in September 2012 supposedly as payment for the trucks.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the Committee will issue a “show cause order” to officials of the Ilocos Norte provincial government who failed to again appear in the hearing despite the issuance of a subpoena.</p>
	<p>HR 782 & Privilege Speech</p>	<p>Reps. Roque (H.) and Bravo (A.)</p>	<p>Inquiry into the alleged anomalies in the procurement process conducted by the Department of Transportation (DOTr) with respect to the award of the Bicol International Airport Package 2B</p>	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the two measures in another meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Pimentel clarified that the determination of the commission of malfeasance, misfeasance and nonfeasance in the procurement of contract for the Bicol International Airport (BIA) package 2B project is based on two points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether or not the BIA project complied with RA 9184 and its implementing rules and regulations (IRR), and; • Whether or not the Department of Transportation's (DOTr) Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) violated existing laws, rules and regulations in the selection of bidders and the awarding of the said contract. <p>Rep. Anthony Bravo PhD. (Party-List, COOP-NATCCO) asked the Secretariat if the DOTr has submitted the documents earlier requested by the Committee, including copies of the Bid Abstract; bid documents of JD Legaspi Construction and EM Cuerpo Inc.; verification of the track record of these two bidders; and other technical and financial documents.</p> <p>DOTr Assistant Secretary Leah Quiambao said that the BAC Secretariat Head informed her that the requested documents were already submitted through the Records Management Service of the House of Representatives.</p> <p>The Committee will scrutinize the documents submitted by the DOTr in its next meeting.</p>

Government Enterprises and Privatization	HB 2279	Rep. Roque (H.)	Creating the Kalayaan Island Group Development Authority	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesus Nonato Saccalan (1st District, North Cotabato), approved HB 2279 with the amendment that the title of the bill will be changed to: "Creating the Kalayaan Island Group Development Authority."</p> <p>Rep. Harry Roque Jr. (Party-List, KABAYAN), author of HB 2279, discussed the activities undertaken by the technical working group (TWG), which he chairs, which was created to study the bill and come up with recommendations. He mentioned that the bill was thoroughly discussed with local officials of the Province of Palawan in a public hearing conducted last March 16, 2017. He emphasized that the creation of an authority will strengthen the Philippines' territorial claim over this area.</p> <p>Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Assistant Secretary for Maritime and Ocean Affairs Office (MOAO) Lourdes Yparraguirre expressed the Department's support for the bill. She stated that it is well within the country's sovereign rights and entitlements to develop, explore, exploit, conserve and manage the country's natural resources within its maritime zones.</p>
	HB 4975	Rep. Yap (V.)	Creating the West Philippine Sea Development Authority, prescribing its powers and functions and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee decided to suspend further deliberation on HB 4975 and to wait for the approval of the Committee on Rules of its request to refer the bill to the Special Committee on West Philippine Sea, chaired by Rep. Feliciano Belmonte Jr. (4 th District, Quezon City), which has jurisdiction over this proposed law. A joint meeting between the two Committees may be arranged afterwards.
Local Government jt. w/ Public Order and Safety	HB 6	Majority Leader Fariñas	Enhancing public safety at the local levels by establishing and maintaining a Department of Public Safety (DPS) in every province, city and municipality	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Pedro Acharon Jr. (1st District, South Cotabato and General Santos City), Chair of the Committee on Local Government, and Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City), Chair of the Committee on Public Order and Safety, agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to draft a Substitute Bill to HB 6.</p> <p>KABAYAN Party-List Rep. Ron Salo sponsored the bill on behalf of the author, Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas (1st District, Ilocos Norte).</p> <p>The bill provides that the DPS, which shall be under the direct control and supervision of the provincial governor, city or municipal mayor, is tasked to implement public order and safety laws and ordinances, help reduce vehicular traffic congestion, and address the effects of man-made and natural disasters.</p> <p>Angelica Sanchez, policy officer of the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP), raised the issue of budgetary constraints and duplication of functions. She explained that</p>

Continuation... Local Government jt. w/ Public Order and Safety				<p>most local government units (LGUs) are already operating on a tight budget such that they may no longer be able to fund the creation of the proposed DPS.</p> <p>Sanchez also said that the proposed powers and functions of the DPS are already being exercised by the Local Peace and Order Council (LPOC) and the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (LDRRMO) of the LGUs. Likewise, some of these powers and functions are within the exclusive domain of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP).</p> <p>Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Budget Management Specialist John Aries Macaspac and Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Emergency Volunteer Corps head Gerry Ilagan shared the same view as Sanchez.</p> <p>PNP P/Supt Ericson Velasquez likewise expressed reservation on the bill, saying that the powers proposed to be granted to the local chief executives might be subject to abuse.</p> <p>The Joint Committee requested the leagues of cities and municipalities to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
Rural Development	Substitute Bill to HBs 2258 & 3953	Reps. Enverga and Kho	Institutionalizing the convergence strategy for sustainable rural development, providing the implementing mechanisms therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Deogracias Ramos Jr. (2nd District, Sorsogon), approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 2258 and 3953 subject to style. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.
	HB 234	Rep. Marcoleta	Establishing the Barangay Integrated Development Approach for Nutrition Improvement (BIDANI) of the rural poor as a network program of the participating state colleges and universities (SUCs) and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 234 subject to style and amendment. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>SAGIP Party-List Rep. Rodante Marcoleta, author of HB 234, that his bill establishes BIDANI as a nutrition-in-development research program to be spearheaded by SUCs to assist the national government in improving the nutrition and general well-being of the poor. He informed the Committee that a bill with similar subject matter was approved on Third Reading during the 16th Congress.</p> <p>The representatives from the academe expressed support for the bills such as: Lorna Garcia, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) BIDANI project leader; Eugenia Baltazar, Central Luzon State University (CLSU) BIDANI project director; and Maria Gracias Cunanan, deputy executive director of the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC).</p> <p>Garcia mentioned that there are seven SUCs nationwide that were trained as BIDANI regional coordinators, namely: UPLB (as the</p>

Continuation... Rural Development				<p>national coordinating body); CLSU; Isabela State University; Bicol State University; UP Visayas; Visayas State University (VSU); and Central Mindanao University (CMU).</p> <p>Under the BIDANI program, Garcia said that local government units (LGUs) will be trained to improve their capabilities in formulating plans and implementing and evaluating the nutrition programs in their respective localities. AKO BICOL Party-List Rep. Rodel Batocabe said a set of criteria for selecting SUCs that will be eligible to implement the program should be included in the bill.</p> <p>However, Rep. Marcoleta explained that his bill covers all SUCs under the BIDANI program, adding that the budgetary requirement for the implementation of the program shall be included in the annual budget of participating SUCs under the General Appropriations Act (GAA).</p>
	HB 530	Rep. Batocabe	Providing for Rural Employment Assistance Program and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 530 subject to style. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Rep. Batocabe, author of HB 530, said that the proposed Rural Employment Assistance Program will provide temporary employment to members of poor households in rural communities to help them achieve a better life, at the same time spur economic growth in their communities.</p> <p>The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), as conveyed by its Project Development Officer for Sustainable Livelihood Program Beverly Pascual, expressed support for the bill.</p>
Social Services	Substitute Bill to HBs 209, 524, 591, 656, 1831, 2173, 2513, 2546, 2738 & 3490	Reps. Violago, Garbin, Velarde, Treñas, Vargas, Santos-Recto, Roa-Puno, Pineda, Tupas, and Tan (A.)	Providing for the mandatory PhilHealth coverage for all persons with disabilities (PWDs), amending for the purpose RA 7277, as amended, otherwise known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sandra Young Eriguel M.D. (2nd District, La Union), approved the substitute bill subject to style and the corresponding Committee Report.</p>
Ways and Means	HB 5089	Rep. Tiangco	Withdrawing all tax exemptions and incentives granted to all telecommunications services company with legislative franchise	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua, agreed to draft a Substitute Bill to HBs 5089 and 5444.</p>
	HB 5444	Deputy Speaker Garin	Reimposing franchise tax on telephone, telegraph and telecommunications entities, amending for the purpose Sections 108 (A) and 119 of RA 8424, as amended, otherwise known as the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997	<p>The Committee likewise agreed to the proposal of AKO-BICOL Party-List Rep. Rodel Batocabe to add a provision in the bill creating an oversight committee that will monitor the implementation of the proposed law and ensure that the tax imposed on telecommunications companies (telcos) will not be passed on to the consumers.</p> <p>Looking at the data in 2015 submitted by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), Deputy Speaker Sharon Garin (Party-list, AAMBIS-OWA) noticed that while the annual value-added tax (VAT) payments of small telcos</p>

<p>Continuation... Ways and Means</p>				<p>average to 25% of the total industry collections, their average annual earnings are only 10% of the aggregate industry income, suggesting that big telcos might not be paying the correct amount of taxes.</p> <p>Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Regular Large Tax Audit Division Chief Greg Buhain explained that there are other taxes being paid by telcos like withholding tax and import duties. On whether telcos are paying the right amount of taxes, Buhain said that the BIR, as in the past, issues "Letters of Authority" to telcos which are identified for audit to check if there are discrepancies in their tax payments.</p> <p>The Committee requested the resource persons to submit the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philippine Chamber of Telecommunications Operators (PCTO) - data on the capital expenditures and operational expenditures of small telcos; • BIR – estimated tax revenues based on the 8% franchise tax on gross receipts proposed in HB 5444; and the 3% franchise tax plus ad valorem tax on gross receipts proposed under HB 5089; • Telcos - breakdown of rates charged to consumers and market sharing per type of service.
	<p><i>Motu proprio inquiry</i></p>		<p>Inquiry into the tax exemptions and incentives granted to franchise holders in the broadcast industry</p>	<p>The Committee will continue its inquiry on the matter in its next meeting.</p> <p><i>Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas</i> (KBP) legal counsel and spokesperson Rudolph Jularbal informed the Committee that the radio and television broadcast industries do not enjoy any form of tax incentives. He added that their goods and services are subject to VAT.</p> <p>Jularbal expressed his objection to the proposed imposition of franchise tax on radio and television broadcast industries, saying that it will be an added financial burden to them. He claimed that the television broadcast industry is already at their "subsistence-level" given the shift from the analog system to digital-terrestrial system required of all networks.</p> <p>The resource persons from GMA network, TV5 Media Center, and ABS-CBN have individually expressed views similar to the KBP's. They were requested to submit their respective position papers for the Committee's consideration.</p>

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Human Rights	HBs 79, 1556, 3312 & 3541	Reps. Aglipay-Villar, Villafuerte, Bagao, and Deputy Speaker Garin	Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Act	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2nd District, Zambales), will deliberate further on HBs 79, 1156, 3312 and 3541 in its next meeting.</p> <p>The TWG thoroughly discussed Section 3 (Definition of Terms) of the bills.</p>
Social Services	HBs 1496, 1742, 2452, 3274, 4262 & 4373	Reps. Abayon, Tan (A.), Yap (A.), Roque, Escudero, and Macapagal-Arroyo	Granting tax and financial relief in times of calamities	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Arthur Yap (3rd District, Bohol), will deliberate further on the six bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>The TWG agreed to use HB 2452, authored by Rep. Yap, as its working draft.</p> <p>Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City) suggested that the extent of calamity should be clearly defined in the bill to ensure that only the targeted individuals will be granted tax and financial relief under the proposed law.</p> <p>Rep. Sandra Young Eriguel M.D. (2nd District, La Union) said that the severity of a calamity or disaster in a certain locality should be reflected in the declaration of a "state of calamity" by the proper local <i>sanggunian</i>, based on data and information from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).</p> <p>The TWG agreed to invite representatives from the Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF), National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), and Office of the Civil Defense (OCD) in its next TWG meeting.</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit their position papers on the bills for the TWG's consideration.</p>
	HB 4322	Rep. Olivarez	Giving the persons affected by typhoons and other natural disasters in areas declared to be in a state of calamity moratorium, forbearance or grace period in the payment of utility bills	The TWG will deliberate further on HB 4322 in its next meeting.
	HB 1101	Rep. Castelo	Establishing the volunteer responders incentives protection program, thereby providing financial and/or non-pecuniary benefits especially for those who become victims themselves of such disasters, calamities or emergencies in the course of duty	The TWG will deliberate further on HB 1101 in its next meeting.
Transportation	Substitute Bill to HBs 1029 & 1288	Reps. Manalo and Baguilat	Establishing the scope and procedure for Philippine ship registry, recognition and enforcement of maritime claims, and limitation of liability, as well as providing essential incentives, which collectively will	The technical working group (TWG), chaired by ANGKLA Party-List Rep. Jesulito Manalo, approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 1029 and 1288 subject to style.

Continuation... Transportation			promote a comprehensive and orderly Philippine ship registry system for the regulation of vessels carrying the flag state	The substitute bill will be submitted to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.
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JOINT CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Quality Affordable Medicines Oversight Committee	<p>Update on the implementation of RA 9502, or the Universally Accessible Cheaper and Quality Medicines Act of 2008, by the following government and private entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Health (DOH) • Food and Drug Administration (FDA) • <i>Laban Konsyumer Inc.</i> 	<p>The Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Ferjanel Biron M.D. (4th District, Iloilo), Chair of the House Committee on Trade and Industry, and Sen. Juan Miguel "Migz" Zubiri, Chair of the Senate Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship, continued its discussion on the status of implementation of RA 9502 with concerned government offices and private organizations.</p> <p>Health Secretary Paulyn Jean Rosell-Ubial informed the Committee that in the nine years since the enactment of RA 9502, the country is still far from achieving its objective of making medicines affordable and accessible for all. According to the Secretary, the following laws must be amended to strengthen the country's cheaper medicines program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RA 6675 or the Generics Act of 1988, by requiring a "generics only" prescription to further promote the cheaper generic drugs and not the preferred brands of doctors and pharmacies. • RA 9502, by creating a Drug Price Regulatory Board. <p>FDA Deputy Director General Ma. Lourdes Santiago gave a status update on the proposed establishment of a "pharmazone" exclusively for medicine manufacturers in the country, in partnership with the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) and the Philippine Pharma Procurement Inc. (PPPI). FDA's role in this project is to facilitate the issuance of permits and licenses to participating drug establishments.</p> <p>Pharmazone is a zone to be set up in the Philippines where drug manufacturing companies such as those from India can establish their business. This is expected to lower the cost of medicines and serve as drug outlets for the poor.</p> <p>Laban Konsyumer Inc. President Victorio Dimagiba supports the creation of a Drug Price Regulatory Board, as endorsed by the DOH and proposed in HB 3252 filed by Rep. Biron. Dimagiba also proposed that the Philippine Competition Commission be requested to look into the alleged collusion or cartel among pharmaceutical industry players.</p> <p>Laban Konsyumer, Inc. is a non-stock, non-profit corporation that advocates the protection of consumer rights by providing the means for redress, continuing education, and information campaigns.</p> <p>On the other hand, PHAP Executive Director Teodoro Padilla cautioned against the establishment of a Drug Price Regulatory Board, arguing that the</p>

<p>Continuation... Banks and Financial Intermediaries</p>	<p>(DBP)</p>	<p>mission and vision of the DBP. Created pursuant to RA 85, as amended by RA 8523, the DBP is a 100% government-owned universal bank that is a pillar in development banking. Romula said that DBP provides financing to infrastructure and logistics, social services, environment, and micro, small and medium entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Presenting DBP's programs and financial performance, DBP President and Chief Executive Officer Cecilia Borromeo said that the bank ranks 8th in terms of assets and deposits and 10th in terms of loans and capital. DBP remains strong for the past 30 years, generating an income of P4.7 billion and P4.2 billion in 2015 and 2016, respectively, and remitting P2.3 billion and P2.5 billion in dividends to the national government during the same period.</p> <p>Speaker Alvarez inquired on the status of the Commission on Audit (COA) report in 2015 which found that the grant of loans to three "privileged" personalities violated the DBP's credit policy. Speaker Alvarez said that the COA report may put the DBP into a high credit risk status which will jeopardize government funds. He requested the DBP to submit the names of these three people mentioned in the COA report, as well as pertinent documents, to determine if there is a need to investigate the previous board of directors of the DBP for violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (RA 3019) and other existing banking laws.</p> <p>Borromeo replied that she will confer this matter with COA and promised to submit the requested documents within one week.</p>
<p>Economic Affairs</p>	<p>Update on the status of implementation of RA 9856 or the Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT)</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Arthur Yap (3rd District, Bohol), listened to the briefing on the status of implementation of RA 9856 or the Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) Law.</p> <p>The REIT law was enacted in 2009 to promote the development of the capital market, democratize wealth by broadening the participation of Filipinos in the ownership of real estate, and protect the investing public by providing an enabling regulatory framework.</p> <p>The Members of the Committee lamented that the law was not implemented since its enactment in 2009 or eight years now. They identified the provisions in the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of RA 9856 which are not in keeping with the law and which have discouraged the creation of REITs, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A higher minimum public ownership (MPO) requirement of 40% on the first year and up to 67% on the third year compared to the 33% required by law; • An escrow equivalent to the total amount of corporate taxes due for the first three years in order to ensure compliance with MPO; and • Imposition of value added tax (VAT) on the transfer of the income-generating property from the sponsor to the REIT. <p>Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Assistant Commissioner Marissa Cabreros explained that the transfer of property under the REIT is subject to VAT based on BIR Revenue Regulations 13-2011 that implements the tax provision of RA 9856.</p> <p>Francisco Lim, president of the Shareholders' Association of the Philippines and who was involved in the crafting of the REIT Law, contended that such transaction falls under Section 40(c)2 of the Tax Code, which under a Supreme Court ruling and a 2007 BIR ruling is VAT exempt. However, he said, former BIR Commissioner Kim Henares later issued a new regulation which subjected such transaction to VAT. He added that the BIR has the option to simply revert back to its 2007 revenue regulation exempting from VAT such property transfer.</p>

<p>Continuation... Economic Affairs</p>		<p>Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) Chief Operating Officer Roel Refran said that the SEC suggested that the concerned government agencies discuss these issues among themselves and arrive at a compromise agreement that will not defeat the objectives of the law.</p> <p>Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Chair Teresita Herbosa said that the SEC is amenable to a 33% to 43% MPO requirement depending on the market conditions.</p> <p>Cabreros committed to revise the revenue regulations in two months time to conform with the provisions of the law.</p>
<p>Youth and Sports Development</p>	<p>Briefing on the country's preparations for the 2017 Southeast Asian (SEA) Games</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by ABONO Party-List Rep. Conrado Estrella III, listened to the briefing conducted by the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC), Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), and the various national sports associations (NSAs) on their preparations for the 29th SEA Games which will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia starting August 19, 2017.</p> <p>Rep. Estrella said that the Committee intends to determine how Congress can help to ensure that adequate support is given to the Filipino athletes to improve their performance in international competitions. For the coming SEA Games, Rep. Estrella said that it is important for the Committee to know the following: the sports events to be participated in; criteria in the selection of athletes; number of athletes that will participate; and the budget allocated for this competition.</p> <p>SEA Games task force head Tomas Carrasco reported that the POC and the PSC convened a task force in January 2017 for the purpose of setting the criteria for the selection of the Philippine delegation to the 29th SEA Games. The criteria for selection include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athlete's performance in past SEA Games; • Athlete's achievements in other international competitions; and • Young athletes with great potential to win in the coming SEA Games, even if they have less experience in international competitions. <p>Carrasco said that the Philippines will participate in 37 out of 38 sports in the coming SEA Games. Based on the preliminary list, the Philippine contingent will be composed of 484 athletes and 146 individuals to form the support group such as coaches, trainers and technicians.</p> <p>PSC Chair William Ramirez added that the budget for supplies and equipment for the athletes is estimated at P60 million.</p> <p>On the part of the Philippine Athletics Track and Field Association (PATAFA), Philip Ella Juico, the association's president, said that it needs the amount of P5.7 million for the training, equipment, and supplies of its athletes in preparation for the 29th SEA Games.</p>