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PRE-PLenary CONFERENCE ON THE FY 2017 BUDGET

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Appropriations	Pre-plenary conference on the proposed FY 2017 budget, plans and programs of the Department of Health (DOH)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (1st District, Davao City), held a pre-plenary conference with the Department of Health (DOH) to discuss the issues and concerns of the House Members on the proposed FY 2017 budget of the DOH.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair Rep. Scott Davies Lanete (3rd District, Masbate) presided over the pre-plenary conference on DOH's proposed budget.</p> <p>Rep. Ferjanel Biron (4th District, Iloilo) questioned the DOH's allocation of P10 billion for infrastructure projects for 2017 when a Commission on Audit (COA) report states that the Department has not yet utilized an amount of P1.77 billion also for infrastructure projects as of December 31, 2015. He added that the budget of DOH for infrastructure may have to be transferred instead to the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) which has the expertise to undertake infrastructure projects.</p> <p>Health Secretary Paulyn Jean Rosell-Ubial claimed that some of DOH's infrastructure projects implemented by the DPWH turn out to be much more expensive and have remained unfinished, which prompted the DOH to employ its own architects and engineers to do the job themselves.</p> <p>Rep. Henry Oaminal (2nd District, Misamis Occidental) countered that the costs of barangay and school-based health centers implemented by the DOH range from P1.4 million to P1.7 million per unit, which are higher than the cost of similar projects of the DPWH at only P1.2 million per unit. The Health Secretary, however, claimed that the DPWH-implemented centers involve a smaller area of only 22 square meters compared to the DOH-implemented centers which have an area of 60 square meters.</p> <p>Rep. Biron also requested an inventory of medical equipment reportedly lying idle in the DOH warehouse in Manila worth about P279 million, which were procured by the Department between 2011 and 2014.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Gwendolyn Garcia (3rd District, Cebu) denounced the non-inclusion of Regions VI and VII in the DOH's Expanded Anti-Dengue Vaccination Program despite the alarming increase of dengue cases in the two regions in recent months and the public pronouncement of DOH in July that these regions will be included in the program.</p> <p>The school-based immunization program against dengue involves vaccination in three doses to be given six months apart. The first dose was administered to selected public school students in the pilot regions (National Capital Region, Region III and Region IV-A) from April to June this year. Thereafter, the program has been put on hold by the DOH.</p> <p>Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" Teves Jr. (3rd District, Negros Oriental) surmised that the abrupt stoppage of the implementation of the program might have been influenced by unscrupulous interest groups and private</p>

Continuation... Appropriations		<p>individuals who stand to benefit from it.</p> <p>Ubial explained that since the vaccine for anti-dengue is new, the DOH needs to comply with the recommendations of the eight-member panel of experts composed of people from the DOH and the World Health Organization (WHO). Citing the resolution of the expert body, Ubial said the three-phase immunization program covered only the pilot regions.</p> <p>With Deputy Speaker Garcia insisting that Regions VI and VII be included in the anti-dengue immunization program, Ubial promised that she will recommend the inclusion of the two regions to the 2nd panel of experts that will be formed by the DOH to review the next phase of the program.</p> <p>Resource persons from the Philippine Heart Center (PHC), Philippine Children's Medical Center (PCMC), Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP) and the National Kidney Institute (NKTl) presented to the Committee their accomplishments, ongoing expansion programs, and future plans.</p> <p>Rep. Lanete advised the DOH to submit the documents requested by the Committee Members before the plenary deliberations of the Department's budget.</p>
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Revision of Laws	HB 2189	Rep. Romualdo	Amending Articles 217, 218, 219, 220, 221 and 222 of Act 3815, otherwise known as the Revised Penal Code , as amended	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Marlyn Primicias-Agabas (6th District, Pangasinan), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on HB 2189.</p> <p>The TWG will be headed by Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus "XJ" Romualdo.</p> <p>The bill seeks to amend the provisions of the Revised Penal Code pertaining to malversation of public funds or property, by upgrading the existing penalty structure and by modifying accordingly the equivalent misappropriated monetary value to reflect the prevailing value of the Philippine peso.</p> <p>Department of Justice (DOJ) State Counsel Rosalie Cumla expressed support for the bill, adding that the passage of the measure will reflect the current conditions and adjust the penalties commensurate to the crimes committed.</p> <p>Deputy Ombudsman Gerard Mosquera of the Office of the Ombudsman (OMB) likewise manifested his Office's support for the bill.</p>
	HB 3605	Speaker Alvarez	Amending Section 13 of Republic Act 3019, as amended, or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to deliberate further on HB 3605.</p> <p>The bill seeks to amend Section 13 (Suspension and Loss of Benefits) of RA 3019 by exempting public officers, who are no longer connected with the office wherein the offense charged was committed, from the imposition of preventive suspension.</p>

Continuation... Revision of Laws				<p>Based on the explanatory note to the bill, a preventive suspension is imposed to prevent an accused from influencing potential witnesses or tampering with records. This threat is effectively removed when the accused is no longer occupying that position.</p> <p>On the part of Rep. Vicente “Ching” Veloso (3rd District, Leyte), he wants the entire Section 13 repealed. The first reason, he said, is to resolve the issue on conflict of jurisdiction over graft and corruption cases filed against public officers.</p> <p>Rep. Veloso explained that by repealing Section 13, the administrative and criminal aspects of the case will be treated separately, with the Court of Appeals exercising jurisdiction over the administrative case and the Sandiganbayan over the criminal case.</p> <p>The other reason for recommending the repeal of Section 13, according to Rep. Veloso, is to afford equal treatment to all public servants similarly charged. He cited Article 8 Section 11 of the Constitution which provides that the Supreme Court en banc shall have the power to discipline judges of lower courts. He remarked that erring judges are in effect treated differently from other public officers, such as the Members of Congress, who are all covered by the imposition of preventive suspension under Section 13 of RA 3019.</p> <p>Rep. Harry Roque (Party-List, KABAYAN) said that the Supreme Court, in the case of Miriam Santiago versus the Sandiganbayan, already clarified that there is no inconsistency between the provision in the Constitution that allows only Congress to suspend or expel its Members and RA 3019 because the preventive suspension contemplated under RA 3019 is not a penalty but only preventive in nature. He added that the suspension or expulsion of Members of Congress is a penalty in itself.</p> <p>Mosquera expressed opposition to the bill, but promised to submit the OMB’s position paper at a later date.</p>
Transportation	HB 5	Majority Leader Fariñas	Providing for stiffer penalties for persons driving under the influence of alcohol, dangerous drugs and similar substances, amending for the purpose Republic Act No. 10586, otherwise known as the Anti-Drunk and Drugged Driving Act of 2013	<p>The Committee, chaired by Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, approved in principle HB 5.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Raneo Abu (2nd District, Batangas), co-author of the bill, pointed out that despite the enactment of RA 10586 in 2013, vehicular accidents involving persons driving under the influence of alcohol and dangerous drugs have increased from 2013 to 2015. He opined that increasing the penalties for such traffic violations should discipline the violators of the law.</p> <p>The chief of the Land Transportation Office (LTO), Assistant Secretary Edgar Galvante, suggested a review of the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) on the renewal/application of driver’s license to allow unscheduled random drug testing of drivers. This approach, according to Galvante, will increase</p>

<p>Continuation... Transportation</p>				<p>the chance of identifying drivers who are drug users.</p> <p>The Highway Patrol Group (HPG) and the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) blamed the lack of equipment and manpower for the weak enforcement of RA 10586.</p> <p>HPG Police Chief Superintendent Antonio Gardiola Jr. said the HPG lacks the equipment, particularly alcohol breath analyzers, to effectively determine the driver's alcohol concentration level in the body. On the other hand, MMDA Chair Thomas Orbos disclosed that in the previous administration, only few MMDA traffic enforcers were deputized to help enforce traffic laws. But he said with the signing of the memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the MMDA and the LTO yesterday, 500 MMDA enforcers were deputized, which will boost up the number of enforcers on the road.</p> <p>The LTO, HPG and MMDA expressed their support for the proposed legislation.</p> <p>Rep. Horacio Suansing Jr. (2nd District, Sultan Kudarat) inquired if the HPG is capable of conducting field sobriety and confirmatory tests.</p> <p>Gardiola replied that before deploying HPG personnel, they are trained on field sobriety testing. However, they could not properly conduct the confirmatory tests for drivers who failed the field sobriety tests without the alcohol breath analyzer.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento mentioned that the LTO can utilize the Road Safety Fund to purchase alcohol breath analyzers and drug-testing kits. He further called the attention of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the LTO on the absence of a fund allocation for the purchase of breath analyzers and drug-testing kits for the years 2016 and 2017.</p> <p>DOTr Undersecretary for Administration and Finance Garry de Guzman said his office will confer with LTO to determine the number of breath analyzers needed. He added that Congress could also realign part of the LTO budget for 2017 for the purchase of these items.</p> <p>Rep. Fernando Gonzales (3rd District, Albay) suggested that barangay officials may be deputized to help enforce RA 10586 and the Motorcycle Helmet Act of 2009 (RA 10054) in their respective areas. The LTO chief said he will look into the possibility of adopting Rep. Gonzales' suggestion.</p> <p>The Committee Members emphasized that apart from increasing the penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol and illegal substances, the enforcement agencies should also strictly enforce traffic laws to address the traffic crisis in Metro Manila and other cities.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFING

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Transportation	Update by concerned government agencies on the issues and concerns relevant to the transport industry	<p>The Committee, chaired by Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, listened to the updates by concerned government agencies on the issues and concerns relevant to the transport industry.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento emphasized that the Committee is supportive of the initiatives of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) to address the traffic crisis in Metro Manila and other cities in the country. He explained that the reason the Committee could not proceed yet with the deliberations on various House measures granting emergency powers to the President is to give way to the plenary deliberations of the proposed FY 2017 national budget until October 7. After the budget deliberations in the plenary, the Committee will resume its deliberations on the grant of emergency powers.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento requested the transportation agencies to submit the documents which the Committee has requested in its previous meetings.</p> <p>The Land Transportation Office (LTO) chief, Assistant Secretary Edgar Galvante, showed the concept design of the driver's license and vehicle license plates, which were done by government-owned APO Production Unit, Inc. He also presented the proposed timeline for the printing of drivers' licenses, which is still for confirmation by the APO.</p> <p>On the issue regarding the motor vehicle plates, Galvante said the LTO is waiting for the ruling of the Supreme Court and the Commission on Audit (COA) on the motion for reconsideration it filed on the matter. The release of new license plates was suspended due to the temporary restraining order (TRO) issued by the Supreme Court and the Notice of Disallowance issued by COA against the LTO and the supplier for violating the procedures prescribed under Republic Act 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act. In the meantime, the LTO is now exploring the possibility of tapping local manufacturers for the production of motor vehicle plates.</p> <p>With regard to the status of the Southwest Interim Terminal in Uniwide Mall along Parañaque coastal road, Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Thomas Orbos reported that efforts are being done to make this temporary terminal ready for operations after 30 days. The Department of Transportation (DOTr) has also committed to revoke the memorandum circulars it issued that allowed buses to enter EDSA, which will result in about 1,000 provincial buses off Metro Manila roads, Orbos added.</p> <p>Asked about the status of the route rationalization plan, DOTr Undersecretary for Planning Rommel Gavieta said that the DOTr plans to develop a public transportation information management center (PTIMC), which will keep track of travel patterns of individuals, to come up with a better plan. But in the meantime, the route rationalization plan will be designed and implemented based on available data.</p> <p>On the construction of the LRT Line 1 extension to Cavite, DOTr Undersecretary for Rail and Toll Roads Noel Kintanar apprised the Committee that all efforts are being done to achieve the groundbreaking target date of by the end of the year. He also said the DOTr is pursuing the expropriation of certain properties to give way to the project and has engaged the services of Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) and the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) for the appraisal of these properties.</p>

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