

Committee Daily Bulletin

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ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Bicol Recovery and Economic Development (Special Committee)	Approval of the Committee's Rules of Procedure	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Renato "Kuya Jojo" Unico, Jr. (1 st District, Camarines Norte), adopted its Rules of Procedure for the 17 th Congress.
	<p>Briefing by the following government agencies on their respective plans and programs for the Bicol Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Region V • Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office V • Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Region V 	<p>The Committee listened to the presentations of various government agencies in Region V on their respective plans and programs for 2017.</p> <p>DPWH Region V Director Reynaldo Tagudando informed the Committee that for 2017 various infrastructure projects are in the pipeline, which include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Road Network Services - widening of national roads, construction and maintenance of bridges along the national roads, construction of by-passes/diversion roads, flyovers/interchanges and off-carriageway improvement; • Flood Management Services - construction/rehabilitation/maintenance of flood mitigation structures and facilities along major river basins and principal rivers, and small water impounding projects (SWIP); and • Construction and Maintenance Services of Other Infrastructures - construction/improvement of roads leading to airports, seaports and to declared tourism destinations, and basic education and health facilities. <p>DSWD Regional Director Arnel Garcia said the Department is tasked to empower the poor, the vulnerable, and the disadvantaged for an improved quality of life by developing, implementing and coordinating social protection and poverty reduction solutions.</p> <p>To achieve its goals, the DSWD implements various programs, among which are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable livelihood program; • Supplementary feeding program in addition to the regular meals that will benefit daycare children beneficiaries; • Social pension for indigent senior citizens aged 60 years old and above; • Protective service programs to individuals, families and communities in crisis or difficult situations and vulnerable or disaster-affected communities; • Recovery and reintegration program of trafficked persons; and • Provision of cash gifts worth P100,000 for every centenarian in the region. <p>Planning Officer Maria Grace Joy Tango of the DILG apprised the Committee of its plans and programs, which include installation/construction of water systems, evacuation facility, local access roads, and small water impounding systems; provision of subsidy to local government units (LGUs); and the provision of capacity development interventions to LGUs to promote local</p>

<p>Continuation... Bicol Recovery and Economic Development (Special Committee)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region V • Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Region V • Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Region V • Philippine National Police (PNP) Region V 	<p>trade/businesses and generate employment at the local level.</p> <p>Tango also reported that in support of the government's peace process, the DILG, through its <i>Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan</i> Program augments the development funds of 47 conflict-affected provinces as identified by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), in consultation with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The Department also provides a Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP) for members of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) who have decided to abandon armed violence and become productive members of society.</p> <p>DENR Region V Director Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez said that for 2017, the DENR plans to enhance its National Greening Program (NGP) by transforming NGP areas into vibrant economic zones through agroforestry. She added that the enhanced NGP aims to link communities to the value chain and promote social entrepreneurship in the target communities to help in alleviating poverty.</p> <p>Apart from the NGP, DENR will also intensify forest protection by adopting community-based forest protection system using an advanced technology in monitoring and surveillance, and forging partnership with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to crackdown violators of environmental laws.</p> <p>MGB Region V I Director Guillermo Molina Jr. said that for 2017, MGB will conduct the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and education campaign (IEC) activities to promote awareness on mineral resources, such as radio and television guesting and press and photo releases; • Geohazard survey and assessments which include field mapping and consultations, seminars and workshops for barangay captains and officials; • Groundwater resources assessments in Catanduanes; and • Issuance and monitoring of mining contracts/permits. <p>EMB Region V Clearance and Permitting Division Chief Henry Lopez apprised the Committee of the DENR's key strategies concerning environmental management, which are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of the watershed/river basin framework in planning; • Adoption of the Area Management and Convergence Approach among national government agencies (NGAs), LGUs, and civil society organizations (CSOs); • Capacity building of DENR frontliners, LGUs, CSO partners, people's organizations (POs), and social entrepreneurs; and • Conduct of IEC, advocacy and social mobilization. <p>Police Chief Superintendent Melvin Ramon Buenafe said the plans, programs and projects of the Police Regional Office V (PRO V) are anchored on the priority programs of the government on combatting illegal drug use and trade, criminality and corruption.</p> <p>Buenafe disclosed that on the first half of this year, 8,079 individuals allegedly involved in illegal drugs are in the PRO V's watchlist. He further reported that since July 1, a total of 330,974 "Oplan Tokhang" operations were conducted region-wide which resulted in the surrender of 45,970 individuals and arrest of 601 drug personalities. He added that 62 drug pushers were also killed in police operations.</p>
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Economic Affairs	Approval of the Committee's Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Arthur Yap (3rd District, Bohol), adopted its Rules of Procedure for the 17th Congress.</p> <p>The Committee, which is presently composed of 21 Members, has general jurisdiction on all matters directly and principally relating to economic development planning and programs inclusive of economic and socio-economic studies and development policies and strategies.</p> <p>Rep. Yap discussed the major accomplishments of the Committee in the 16th Congress and the past Congresses. He underscored the need to redefine the jurisdiction and work of the Committee after noticing that most of the measures currently referred to it and even those passed into law during the previous Congresses were mostly about the creation of economic zones. The Secretariat was directed to discuss this matter with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).</p> <p>The Members of the Committee agreed to invite the Department of Finance (DOF) and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) to a meeting to resolve the issues delaying the promulgation of the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9505 or the Personal Equity and Retirement Account (PERA) and RA 9856 or the Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT). Both laws were enacted in 2009 during the 14th Congress.</p>
	Briefing by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) on the country's socio-economic performance, challenges, and policy directions, and the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022	<p>NEDA Deputy Director General Rosemarie Edillon said that over the past 17 years, the Philippines' growth trajectory has been moving upwards, with an average of 6.2% GDP growth rate during the period 2010 to 2015. Other positive socio-economic performance indicators cited by Edillon include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment and industry are increasingly becoming major drivers of GDP growth; • Inflation has been tame, while the financial sector is stable; • External position remains robust with positive current account, declining external debt, and healthy international reserves; • Stronger fiscal position is recognized by the investment-grade sovereign credit rating; • Growth-enhanced fiscal space has allowed major investments in infrastructure and in social services; • Employment rate is increasing and underemployment is on a declining trend; • Poverty reduction has improved, but needs to accelerate further; and • Improvements were also visible in terms of good governance. <p>While the country's economy remains vibrant, Edillon pointed out the need to remain vigilant and well-positioned against external and domestic risks to growth, such as: the fragile growth in Japan and the European Union; slowdown in large emerging economies, particularly China; uncertainties over "Brexit" (United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union); geopolitical tensions in the Middle East; maritime dispute in the West Philippine Sea; and even the country's traffic congestion, delays in infrastructure and reconstruction projects, and closure of mines.</p> <p>Edillon presented NEDA's long-term (25 years) vision for the country dubbed "<i>Ambisyon Natin 2040</i>," which will serve as an anchor for development planning across administrations and as guide for engaging with international development partners.</p> <p>Likewise, Edillon discussed the proposed Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022 and NEDA's proposed reform measures affecting various sectors.</p>

<p>Continuation... Small Business and Entrepreneurship Development</p>		<p>or high cost of doing business, lack of access to market, and low productivity and efficiency;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial barriers, such as lack of access to finance. <p>With regard to the accomplishments under the MSME Development Plan for 2011-2016, Maglaya highlighted the major outputs including the generation of a total of 2.59 million jobs, P69.34 billion domestic sales, P171.73 billion investments, and US \$79.42 billion export sales, among others.</p> <p>In presenting the MSME Development Plan for 2017-2022, Maglaya mentioned the following goals that the plan intends to achieve: institute regulatory reforms, enhance access to financing, upgrade the quality of the workforce, increase productivity and foster innovations, and increase export contribution.</p> <p>Maglaya likewise reported on the initiatives undertaken by the DTI to help sustain the growth and development of MSMEs, among which are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched 336 <i>negosyo</i> centers nationwide; • Participated in Asian trade fairs; • Conducted 6,774 skills development sessions for 277,055 MSME beneficiaries through the Small Medium Enterprises Roving Academy (SMERA); • Launched the “Mentor Me Program” to scale up business through coaching and mentoring; • Enhanced access to financing through the “Small Enterprises to Sound Lending Opportunities” (ASENSO) Program; and • Monitored compliance with RA 6977, mandating all lending institutions to set aside at least eight percent for micro and small enterprises and at least two percent for medium enterprises of their total loan portfolio for MSME credit for a period of ten years. <p>Asked whether the country has sufficient laws in place that will sustain the growth and development of MSMEs, Maglaya said there are enough laws for that purpose and all that is needed is proper implementation, including proper dissemination of information.</p>
	<p>Briefing by Presidential Consultant for Entrepreneurship Jose Ma. “Joey” Concepcion III on the entrepreneurship efforts and programs of the country</p>	<p>Jose Ma. “Joey” Concepcion III, Presidential Consultant for Entrepreneurship, discussed the MSME development program dubbed as “Kapatid, Angat Lahat! Inclusive Growth Program.” The program is a multi- sectoral approach aimed at helping the MSMEs grow and prosper. The program has three major components, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring - a pool of successful entrepreneurs will be tapped to mentor micro enterprises; • Intervention - government to extend financial or technical assistance to MSME entrepreneurs; and • Inclusive business - big businesses to help poor communities in both demand (SME suppliers of raw materials) and supply side (distributorship or retailership). <p>Concepcion emphasized the value of cooperation between the private sector and the government, including the local government units (LGUs), towards the successful implementation of MSME development programs.</p> <p>He also mentioned that the success rate for a business, particularly for MSMEs, is higher if it is focused on a particular product or industry.</p>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Dangerous Drugs	HB 3191	Rep. Unabia	Requiring an annual mandatory drug testing for all government officials and employees, amending for the purpose RA 9165, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Robert "Ace" Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the three bills.</p> <p>The TWG shall include as members the representatives from the Department of Health (DOH), Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Department of Education (DepEd), Civil Service Commission (CSC) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).</p> <p>Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT TEACHERS) expressed concern about the possible negative effect on the students who would test positive for drug use. Dr. Alfonso Villaroman, Chief Executive Program Officer of the DOH Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (TRC) in Bicutan, said the results of the test will be treated with utmost confidentiality, and so with the subsequent intervention and treatment, in order not to compromise the safety of the student.</p> <p>Rep. Castro likewise pointed out the huge cost involved in conducting drug tests in schools considering that only a small percentage of students have tested positive for drug use in previous years.</p> <p>Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" Teves Jr. (3rd District, Negros Oriental) suggested that the kit for initial drug testing be separated from that of the confirmatory test in order to reduce the cost of drug testing. Currently, Rep. Teves explained that the kits for initial and confirmatory tests are bundled in one package.</p> <p>While expressing his support for the bills, DDB Secretary Benjamin Reyes underscored the importance of identifying a clear source of funding for the implementation of the proposed mandatory drug testing.</p>
	HB 3611	Rep. Lanete	Mandating the random drug-testing in all government agencies, providing funds therefor	
	HB 3640	Rep. Antonio	Mandating annual drug-testing to all students of secondary, tertiary, vocational, and technical schools, providing funds therefor	
	HBs 9, 118, 132, 265, 345, 948, 1298, 1398, 1642, 1779, 1782, 2100, 2113, 2160, 2289, 2690, 2736, 2985, 3044, 3108, 3232, 3248, 3598, 3806, & 3819 and HR 271	Majority Leader Fariñas, Reps. Tan (A.), Batocabe, Villafuerte, Romualdez, Ocampo, Robes, Amante, Villarica, Catamco, Calixto-Rubiano, Paduano, Pineda, Eusebio, Tan (S.), Billones, Antonio, Malapitan,	Establishing drug rehabilitation centers across the country, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to consolidate the 25 measures.</p> <p>The TWG shall include as members representatives from the DDB, DOH, Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), DepED, and CHED.</p> <p>During the meeting, Reyes disclosed that a Chinese philanthropist has financed the construction of a mega drug treatment and rehabilitation center that can cater to 10,000</p>

Continuation... Dangerous Drugs		Aglipay-Villar, Marquez, Primicias-Agabas, Deputy Speaker Hernandez, Reys. Aumentado, Revilla, and Castelo		<p>patients. When asked if operating such a large facility would be doable, both Reyes and Villaroman said a smaller facility would be much easier to manage.</p> <p>Rep. Joseph Stephen Paduano (Party-List, ABANG LINGKOD) suggested that the money intended for this mega-facility be spent instead for building multiple rehabilitation centers spread across the country.</p> <p>Villaroman assured the Committee that the suggestion of Rep. Paduano will be conveyed to the project implementors.</p>
	HB 1641	Rep. Batocabe	Allocating a portion of the excise tax on alcohol and tobacco for the maintenance and operation of state-run drug rehabilitation centers, amending for the purpose RA 10351	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to deliberate further on HB 1641.</p> <p>The TWG shall include as members representatives from the DDB, DOH, DBM, Department of Finance (DOF) and Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).</p>
	HRs 225 & 226	Reps. Cortuna & Castelo	Expressing the collective sense of the House of Representatives to thank and commend San Miguel Corporation, through its President and Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Ramon Ang, for its offer to donate P1 billion to the government with the end in view of building new drug rehabilitation facilities in strategic areas	The Committee adopted HRs 225 and 226.
	HR 358	Rep. Barbers	Commending the TV program "FPJ's <i>Ang Probinsyano</i> " and endorsing Rodel Nacienceno (Coco Martin) as the celebrity advocate for a drug-free Philippines	The Committee adopted HR 358.
Public Information	HBs 684 & 1479	Reps. Del Mar & Abayon	Amending Republic Act No. 53, as amended, or the law exempting the publisher, editor or reporter of any publication from revealing the source of published news or information obtained in confidence by including within its coverage journalists from broadcast, news agencies and internet publications	<p>The Committee, chaired by Party-List ACT TEACHERS Rep. Antonio Tinio, approved HB 684 in consolidation with HB 1479.</p> <p>Rep. Raul Del Mar (1st District, Cebu City), author of HB 684, underscored the need to expand the coverage of RA 53 to include as well journalists from broadcast, news or wire agencies, and internet-based publications as among those who are exempted from revealing their source of information obtained in confidence.</p>
	HBs 2588 & 3027	Reps. Rodriguez & Zarate	Requiring the use of Filipino sign language insets for local news programs, amending for the purpose Section 22 of RA 7277, as amended, otherwise known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)	The Committee approved HB 2588 in consolidation with HB 3027.
	HBs 32, 63, 75, 77, 112, 120, 127, 161, 197, 224, 237, 251, 330, 334, 463, 560, 903, 973, 1055, 1121, 1251,	Reps. Del Mar, Nograles, Vargas, Aglipay-Villar, Baguilat, Tan (A), Tambunting, Belmonte (J.C), Lopez (M.L.), Roque (H), Almonte,	Strengthening the right of citizens to information held by the government	<p>The Committee decided to create a technical working group (TWG) to study and craft a substitute bill to the 33 measures proposing freedom of information (FOI).</p> <p>Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Assistant Secretary Kristian Ablan apprised the Committee on the status of implementation of Executive Order (EO) No. 2, which operationalizes in the executive branch</p>

Continuation... Public Information	1654, 1855, 1873, 2269, 2284, 2309, 2331, 2773, 2853 & 3022, HR 153, and Privilege Speech 23	Bordado, Romualdo, Zarate, Tugna, Castelo, Fortuno, Fortun, Antonino, Alejano, Biazon, Angara-Castillo, Aragones, Montoro, Bagao, Villarin, Cojuangco, Villafuerte, Rocamora, & Atienza		<p>the people's constitutional right to information and the full disclosure and transparency in the public service.</p> <p>Ablan said that the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) already submitted their respective lists of recommended exceptions from the FOI coverage. The Office of the Executive Secretary (OES) is presently categorizing the lists to comply with the instruction of the President to limit the number of exceptions to a maximum of 10. According to Ablan, the FOI laws in other countries such as Australia, the United States, as well as Singapore and Thailand, have allowed only up to 10 exceptions.</p> <p>The OES is expected to finish categorizing the list of exceptions by next week, afterwards a copy of which will be furnished the Committee.</p> <p>Ablan said the PCOO will be launching a series of workshops to familiarize government offices about the electronic-Freedom of Information (eFOI) program starting October 14, 2016.</p> <p>The eFOI anticipates a possible surge of requests for information from the public which will be difficult for government agencies to handle.</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit to the Committee their position papers on the proposed measures.</p>
Public Order and Safety	HB 6	Majority Leader Fariñas	Enhancing public safety at the local level by establishing and maintaining a Department of Public Safety in every province, city and municipality	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City), will deliberate further on HB 6 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas (1st District, Ilocos Norte) underscored the importance of creating a Department of Public Safety (DPS) in every province, city and municipality. The establishment of a DPS, which shall be placed under the direct control and supervision of the local chief executive, will increase the local government units' (LGUs) responsiveness to challenges concerning public order and safety.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Gwendolyn Garcia (3rd District, Cebu) suggested that the bill be taken up together with the Committee on Local Government as it will entail the amendment of the Local Government Code.</p> <p>Executive Director Sandy Paredes of the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP) requested that the corresponding appropriation for the establishment and operation of the DPS be incorporated in the bill to ensure that funds will be made available for this purpose. Deputy Speaker Garcia said that Section 5 (Funding) of HB 6 be amended accordingly.</p>

Continuation... Public Order and Safety				<p>Section 5 of the bill provides that the amount necessary for the initial implementation of the proposed law shall be charged against the current appropriations of the LGUs, and thereafter shall be included in their respective annual budgets.</p> <p>Concerned about the huge budgetary requirement the establishment of DPS in all localities may entail, Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Division Chief (OIC) Aries Magaspac called for a thorough study of the bill and the holding of consultations with the different LGU leagues to get their sentiments on the matter.</p>
	HB 176	Rep. Nograles (K.A.)	Providing for stiffer penalties on illegal discharge of firearms, amending for the purpose Article 254, Title VIII, Chapter I of Act 3815, as amended, or the Revised Penal Code	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the three bills and harmonize the pertinent provisions.</p> <p>Rep. Horacio Suansing Jr. (2nd District, Sultan Kudarat) was designated to chair the TWG.</p>
	HB 1348	Rep. Acop	Defining the offense of “indiscriminate discharge of firearm” and providing penalties for violations thereof, amending for the purpose RA 10591, which provided for a comprehensive law on firearms and ammunition	<p>The resource persons present were requested to submit their respective position papers on the matter.</p>
	HB 3837	Rep. Herrera-Dy	Defining and penalizing the unlawful use of firearms, amending for the purpose Article 254 of Act No. 3815, otherwise known as the Revised Penal Code	
Transportation	HBs 3, 38, 554, 1315, 1666, 3048, 3162, 3314, 3442, 3617, 3716 & 3712	Majority Leader Fariñas, Rep. Yap (A.), Deputy Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo, Reps. Castelo, Revilla, Deputy Speaker Cayetano, Reps. Tambunting, Primicias-Agabas, Escudero, Belmonte (J.C.), Gonzales (A. D.), & Salceda	Granting the President emergency powers to address the massive traffic congestion in the country	<p>The Committee, chaired by Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, will deliberate further on the 13 measures in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento expressed his concern over the use of the term “emergency powers” as it may have legal and constitutional implications and may be open to different interpretations. He prefers to refer to the bill as the “Traffic Crisis Act.” He added that the term brings to mind unpleasant memories of the electric power crisis in 1993, the declaration of state of national emergency due to acts of rebellion and insurgency, and the Martial Law regime.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento said that Congress should be able to pass a law that is clear, sufficient, and free from other interpretations. He hoped that the final draft of the bill will be finished before Congress goes on recess on October 21, 2016.</p>
	HR 119	Deputy Speaker Abu	Resolving the serious nationwide traffic problems by urgently granting the power of traffic management and control of national roads in the provinces to the Office of the Provincial Governors	<p>He went on to say that the traffic problem can be attributed largely to uncoordinated traffic management with each local government unit (LGU) exercising autonomy over traffic regulation.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento said that the passage of the MMDA’s charter subsequent to the Local Government Code “is a legislative recognition that there are metro-wide services such as</p>

Continuation... Transportation				<p>traffic management that transcend the political autonomy of each of the 16 cities and one municipality of Metro Manila.”</p> <p>However, while the MMDA mandate is clearly spelled out in its charter, Rep. Sarmiento noted that, in reality, its powers are curtailed due to the principle of local autonomy.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento urged the Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), MMDA, Inter-Agency Council for Traffic (I-ACT), Philippine National Police - Highway Patrol Group (PNP-HPG), and the different LGUs to harmonize their policies and rules and regulations on land transportation to address the worsening traffic problem not only in Metro Manila but in other highly urbanized cities as well.</p> <p>Quezon City Mayor Herbert Bautista proposed a “partnership plan” between the national government and the LGUs to address the pressing issues that hound Metro Manila, such as traffic congestion, flooding, influx of informal settlers, antiquated water pipes, and lack of classrooms and underutilized properties of state universities.</p> <p>Most of the Members of the Committee and resource persons present expressed their support for any legal or administrative measure that will immediately address the traffic crisis in Metro Manila.</p>
Women and Gender Equality	Substitute Bill to HBs 152, 472, 483, 509, 580, 1046, 1382, 1644, 1912, 2838, 3224, 3445, 3513, 3645 & 3650	Reps. Aglipay-Villar, Tinio, Villar, Deputy Speakers Andaya & Cayetano, Reps. De Jesus, Vargas, Villarica, Violago, Brawner Baguilat, Tambunting, Primicias-Agabas, Alvarez (M.), Rodriguez (M.) and Castelo	Increasing the maternity leave period to 100 days for female workers in the government service and in the private sector, and granting an option to extend for an additional 30 days without pay, amending for the purpose Republic Act No. 1161, as amended	<p>The Committee, chaired by DIWA Party-List Rep. Emmeline Aglipay-Villar, approved the substitute bill, as amended and subject to style, and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Elizabeth Angsioco, women's rights advocate and head of the Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines (DSWP), lamented the Philippines' status as one of the countries with the shortest maternity leave benefit (60 days) for female workers, based on a study of the International Labor Organization (ILO), which is extremely inadequate. She hopes, however, that the passage of the proposed law should not result in further discrimination of women in hiring and promotion in the workplace.</p> <p>Rep. Rosanna “Ria” Vergara, (3rd District Nueva Ecija) also raised a similar concern, that female workers might be preferred less by employers. She then suggested that female workers be given jobs which can be performed outside the office premises or in their homes, harnessing the available technology for the purpose.</p> <p>Ifugao Rep. Teddy Brawner Baguilat Jr. and GABRIELA Party-List Rep. Emmi de Jesus also expressed their support for the bill.</p>

Continuation... Women and Gender Equality				<p>On the other hand, Social Security System (SSS) Commissioner Michael Victor Alimurung argued that extending the maternity leave period to 100 days will adversely affect the social security fund's life. He said the SSS is inclined to support legislative measures that will be beneficial to both its members and the business.</p> <p>Before the meeting ended, Rep. Aglipay-Villar informed the Committee Members and its guests that the House of Representatives will sponsor events to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on the third week of November.</p>
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OTHER MATTERS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Women and Gender Equality	Election of subcommittee chairpersons and co-chairpersons	<p>The Committee, chaired by DIWA Party-List Rep. Emmeline Aglipay-Villar, elected the subcommittee chair and co-chair of the following Subcommittees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) – Rep. Divina Grace Yu (1st District, Zamboanga del Sur) as chair and GABRIELA Party-List Rep. Arlene Brosas as co-chair; • LGBT Rights – Rep. Ma. Lourdes Aggabao (4th District, Isabela) as co-chair; • Oversight – ACT TEACHERS Party-List Rep. France Castro as co-chair; and • Women and the Rights of the Girl-Child – Rep. Jennifer Austria-Barzaga (4th District, Cavite) as co-chair. <p>The chairpersons of the last three subcommittees were already elected in the previous meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>Rep. Aglipay-Villar highlighted the following legislative agenda of the Committee for the 17th Congress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded Maternity Leave Law; • Anti-Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Discrimination Act; • Amendments to the Family Code, Anti-Violence Against Women Act, and Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995; • Resources Development and Crisis Assistance Center for Women Act; and • Women Participation and Representation in Political Parties Act.