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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Ways and Means	HB 4144	Rep. De Vera	Amending Section 145 (C) of the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) of 1997, as amended, by retaining the two-tiered tax structure and increasing the specific tax rates on cigarettes packed by machine	The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua, approved HB 4144 and the corresponding Committee Report.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 353, 1649 & 3942	Reps. Aglipay-Villar, Villarica & Salon	Providing for a Revised Apprenticeship Program, repealing for the purpose Chapters I and II of Title II of Presidential Decree (PD) 442, as amended, otherwise known as the Labor Code of the Philippines	The Committee approved the tax provision of the Substitute Bill to HBs 353, 1649 and 3942.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 1204 & 2900	Reps. Yu & Aumentado	Strengthening the Balik Scientist Program and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved with amendment the tax provision of the Substitute Bill to HBs 1204 and 2900.
	HB 354	Rep. Aglipay-Villar	Establishing a Productivity Improvement Program, repealing for the purpose RA 6971, otherwise known as the Productivity Incentives Act of 1990	The Committee approved the tax provision of HB 354.
	HB 2930	Rep. Umali	Amending and extending for 25 years the franchise granted to Smart Communications, Inc. (formerly Smart Information Technologies, Inc.) under RA 7294, or the law granting Smart Information Technologies, Inc. (SMART) a franchise to establish, install, maintain, lease and operate integrated telecommunications/computer/electronic services and stations throughout the Philippines for public domestic and international telecommunications	The Committee approved with amendment the tax provisions of HB 2930.
Women and Gender Equality	Substitute Bill to HBs 51, 267, 949, 1034, 1108, 1451, 1854, 3245, 3555, 3701 & 4414	Reps. Bag-Ao, Roman, Ocampo, Castelo, Baguilat, Belaro, Aragones, Villarica, Villarín, Aglipay-Villar, and Zarate	Prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression (SOGIE) and providing penalties thereof	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Emmeline Aglipay-Villar (Party-List, DIWA), approved with amendments the Substitute Bill to the 11 measures.</p> <p>Among the agreements reached during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delete Sections 6 (Employers), 7 (Academic Freedom), and 8 (Privacy Rights); Rename the “Women and Children’s Desk” now existing in all police stations to “Women, Children and Gender Rights Protection Desk” (Section 12-Redress Mechanisms for SOGIE-related cases); and

Continuation... Women and Gender Equality				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include at least three civil society organizations (CSOs) with proven expertise and track record in the list of agencies that will promulgate the law's implementing rules and regulations (IRR).
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ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Trade and Industry	Approval of the Committee's Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ferjanel Biron M.D. (4th District, Iloilo), adopted its Rules of Procedure for the 17th Congress.</p> <p>The Committee has jurisdiction over all matters directly and principally relating to domestic and foreign trade, intellectual property rights, patents, trade names and trademarks, standards, weights and measures, designs, quality control, consumer protection, prices and marketing of commodities, handicrafts and cottage industries, and development, regulation and diversification of industry investments.</p> <p>Committee Secretary Valentino Palanca reported the Committee's accomplishments for the 16th Congress, highlighting its role in the passage of the following laws: Philippine Lemon Law (RA 10642), <i>Go Negosyo</i> Act (RA 10644), Foreign Ships Co-Loading Act (RA 10668), and No Shortchanging Act of 2016 (RA 10909).</p>
	Briefing by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on its plans and programs and legislative agenda	<p>The Committee listened to the briefing conducted by the DTI on the trade and investment situation and prospects, and its mandate, plans and programs, and legislative agenda.</p> <p>DTI Undersecretary Ceferino Rodolfo said that the DTI is responsible for realizing the country's goal of establishing a globally competitive and innovative industry and services sector that contributes to inclusive growth and employment generation.</p> <p>Rodolfo reported that the Philippines is the fastest growing economy in Asia. He cited the following statistics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 7.1% during the third quarter of 2016; • Investments hit the 97% mark as of November 2016; and • Exports reached US\$41.69 billion and US\$8.23 billion in terms of goods and services, respectively, in 2016. <p>Rodolfo likewise highlighted the country's trade negotiation agenda based on its agreements with the World Trade Organization (WTO), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and other bilateral agreements.</p> <p>DTI Undersecretary Nora Terrado gave an update on the outcome of President Rodrigo Duterte's official visits: in Vietnam, that paves the way for expanded bilateral cooperation beyond security, trade and investments to include education, training, and people-to-people exchanges; Brunei, which committed to help develop the Mindanao <i>halal</i> industry; and China, Japan, and Malaysia, that led to numerous agreements in terms of investment projects and credit facilities.</p> <p>Asked by Rep. Rosanna Ria Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija) on the status of implementation of the <i>Go Negosyo</i> Act (RA 10644), DTI Assistant Secretary Ireneo Vizmonte said that the DTI has</p>

Continuation... Trade and Industry		<p>earmarked P1 billion fund for MSME projects for 2017. (The law strengthens MSMEs by establishing “negosyo centers” in every province, city and municipality that will promote the ease of doing business and facilitate access to service for MSMEs within its jurisdiction.)</p> <p>On the question raised by ANGKLA Party-List Rep. Jesulito Manalo on the DTI’s proposed amendment to the Omnibus Investment Code (EO 226), Rodolfo promised to submit its proposal at a later date (EO 226 provides a comprehensive set of incentives for local and foreign enterprises engaged in activities considered by the Philippine government as high priority for national development.)</p> <p>The DTI responded to the queries raised by the Members of the Committee concerning their respective districts.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Information and Communications Technology (Technical Working Group)	HB 671	Rep. Yap (V.)	Providing for penalties or fines against erring public telecommunications entities for violation of the terms or conditions of any certificate, authority, order, decision, resolution or regulation of the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), amending for the purpose Sections 21 and 23 of Commonwealth Act 146, otherwise known as the Public Service Act	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Committee Secretary Ranier Alvarado, will deliberate further on the three bills in its next meeting. It will also include in its discussion HBs 1946 and 3052, the subject matter of which is similar to the three bills.</p> <p>HBs 1946 and 3052, respectively authored by Reps. Vilma Santos-Recto (6th District, Lipa City) and Victor Yap (2nd District, Tarlac), both seek to expand the coverage and strengthen the powers of the NTC.</p> <p>The TWG agreed to invite the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), NTC, and telecommunications companies (telcos) to solicit their comments on the proposed measures in its next meeting, to be held on January 25, 2017.</p>
	HB 3996	Rep. Pineda	Amending Section 21 of Commonwealth Act 146	
	HB 3876	Rep. Zarate	Expanding the powers of the NTC, classifying short messaging service (SMS) and internet services as utilities imbued with public interest and providing penalties for violations thereof, amending RA 7925, otherwise known as the Public Telecommunications Policy Act of the Philippines	

INDUSTRY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Energy	Briefing by private petroleum organizations on certain issues and concerns relative to the downstream oil industry	<p>The Committee, chaired by Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Jay Velasco, listened to the briefing conducted by the Philippine Institute of Petroleum (PIP) and the Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association (IPPCA).</p> <p>PIP Executive Director Teddy Reyes introduced PIP as a non-stock, non-profit, SEC-registered group of businesses operating in the oil industry. It is an independent body representing the common interest of its members, including the three big oil companies – Shell Philippines, Petron Corporation and Chevron Corporation (Caltex).</p> <p>Reyes discussed the various issues and concerns confronting the country’s downstream oil industry. He said that some oil</p>

<p>Continuation... Energy</p>		<p>companies do not comply with the biofuels blend mandated under RA 9367 or the Biofuels Act of 2006, which is not fair to complying oil players.</p> <p>RA 9367 mandates that all liquid fuels for motors and engines sold in the country shall contain 2% blend of biodiesel and 10% blend of bioethanol.</p> <p>Reyes also said that the industry is worried about proposals to increase fuel taxes and the proliferation of smuggled fuel products.</p> <p>Meanwhile, IPPCA President Fernando Martinez said that the deregulation of the downstream oil industry has given motorists more choices from where to source their fuel requirements, and resulted in price competitiveness and intense competition between the big oil companies and the new players.</p> <p>While recognizing the goals of the Biofuels Act, Martinez also pointed out that the implementation of the law gave rise to some problems. He disclosed that a circular from the Department of Energy (DOE), mandating oil companies to exhaust all locally-produced ethanol, resulted to an average of P2 per liter increase in the prices of gasoline products. He also mentioned that aside from the failure of the local ethanol producers to deliver the volume required by the oil companies, the price of local ethanol was twice or thrice the price of imported ethanol.</p> <p>Martinez voiced out his concern about the use of methanol, a flammable chemical derived from the distillation of wood, by some unscrupulous industry players as blend in gasoline fuel. He said that in a recent research conducted by the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA), methanol can cause corrosion of metallic components of fuel systems, and has been found to be highly toxic when inhaled.</p> <p>Rep. Carlos Roman Uybarreta (Party-List, 1-CARE) inquired on the viability of producing ethanol locally and on the reported shortage of locally-produced ethanol.</p> <p>Martinez said that a potential of 500 million to 1 billion liters of ethanol can be produced locally if the Department of Agriculture (DA) will be aggressive in providing technical support to local feedstock farmers. He also mentioned the lack of land consolidation as another factor that contributes to the shortage.</p>
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