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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Higher and Technical Education (Technical Working Group)	HBs 1583, 1942, 2635, 2771, 3427, 3452, 4701 & 4800	Reps. Vargas, Santos-Recto, Gatchalian, Salceda, Tan (S.), Villarin, Revilla, and Elago	Providing full tuition subsidy for students enrolled in state universities and colleges (SUCs) and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by the Committee Chair herself Rep. Ann Hofer (2nd District, Zamboanga Sibugay), will deliberate further on the 58 bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) was requested to submit the guidelines for the implementation of the free tuition fee program of the national government pursuant to RA 10687, or the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Law.</p> <p>The UniFAST Law, which was enacted in 2015, provides for a comprehensive and unified financial assistance system for tertiary education in both public and private institutions, including scholarships, grants-in-aid, and student loans.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Hofer clarified that the discussion in today's TWG meeting will focus on bills granting free tuition fees in SUCs, as well as bills providing for a loan voucher system for tertiary-level students.</p> <p>CHED Chair Patricia Licuanan reported that the draft guidelines for the implementation of the program has been submitted to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) for its approval. An additional P8 billion has been allotted to fund the implementation of the free tuition fee program.</p> <p>According to Licuanan, the additional allotment may be able to provide free tuition fees for SY 2017-2018, with the expected low enrollment turnout. However, Licuanan expressed concern that the government might not be able to afford the cost of the succeeding years of implementation. She claimed that a huge amount, ranging from P300 billion to P2 trillion, would be needed upon the full implementation of the K-12 Program and the expected surge in the number of students transferring from private higher</p>
	HBs 813 & 4341	Reps. Batocabe and Villanueva	Providing free college education to one public high school graduate in a family	
	HB 2596	Rep. Santos-Recto	Granting free tertiary education to the top five percent graduates of public science high schools pursuing a degree in the field of Science and Technology, Mathematics and Engineering	
	HBs 33, 1091 & 3149	Reps. Del Mar, Lanete, and Alejano	Providing free college education in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in SUCs	
	HBs 181, 1228, 3704, 4256 & 4483	Reps. Crisologo, Umali, Romualdez, Belaro, and Castelo	Instituting free college education for indigent students	
	HB 578	Rep. Panganiban	Providing a national scholarship program for indigenous peoples (IPs), appropriating funds therefor	
	HBs 290, 2458 & 2472	Reps. Romero, Yap (A.), and Geron	Providing scholarship in agricultural courses	
	HBs 1590, 2984, 3193 & 3852	Reps. Fuentebella, Antonio, Espino, and Salon	Granting college scholarship to legitimate dependent children of farmers and fisherfolk enrolled in SUCs and appropriating funds therefor	
	HBs 2137, 4146 & 4147	Reps. Barbers and Lazatin	Providing scholarship grants to children of active members of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 1089	Rep. Lanete	Providing free primary, secondary and tertiary education courses in SUCs	

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education (Technical Working Group)	HB 1432	Rep. Belaro	Granting free tuition fees to teachers' dependents	<p>education institutions (HEIs) to the SUCs.</p> <p>Licuanan also recommended that subsequent congressional actions should be within the scope of the UniFAST framework, adding that many of the objectives of the proposed bills have already been addressed by the UniFAST Law.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Evelina Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon), DBM Director Cristina Clasara said there are three issues that need to be resolved first before the DBM can act on the guidelines on the free tuition fee program submitted by CHED, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear parameters, based on family income brackets as determined by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), need to be established to identify who among those "financially disadvantaged but academically able" students shall be given priority; • Whether or not the University of the Philippines (UP) should be included in the program, considering that it is presently implementing a socialized tuition scheme; and • The rationale for CHED's inclusion of administrative costs in the program's implementation. <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
	HBs 1445 & 3708	Reps. Belaro and Bolilia	Granting free tuition fees to teachers pursuing graduate/post-graduate studies	
	HBs 1486 & 1956, 2138, 2590	Reps. Abayon, Tambunting, Barbers, and Lacson	Granting public elementary and high school teachers non-wage benefits in the form of free tertiary education in any SUC for dependent children	
	HB 3959	Rep. Gatchalian	Providing scholarship program to students enrolling in teacher education and providing incentives for teaching in public schools	
	HBs 898, 2166, 2951, 3472 & 3586	Reps. Tan (A.), Santos-Recto, Herrera-Dy, and Deputy Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Establishing a medical scholarship and service program and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 1367	Rep. Tan (A.)	Establishing a midwifery scholarship and placement program and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 806	Rep. Batocabe	Instituting a public administration and governance scholarship program	
	HB 1810	Rep. Vargas	Establishing a national scholarship program for studies in Nuclear Science and Nuclear Engineering	
	HBs 1195, 1433, 2819, 3388, 4298 & 4825	Reps. Loyola, Belaro, Suansing (E.), Deputy Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo, and Reps. Cortuna and Cua	Instituting a student loan program in tertiary education	
	HB 4944	Rep. Nograles	Providing free quality higher education and creating the free quality higher education voucher system and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 4226	Rep. Belaro	Providing assistance to Filipino overseas graduate students	
	Information and Communications Technology (Technical Working Group)	HB 1067	Rep. Lanete	
HB 1447		Rep. Belaro	Creating the National Center for Scholarships	
HB 3707		Rep. Roman	Establishing the National Scholarship Agency, providing funds therefor, amending for this purpose RA 10687 or the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST)	
HB 2871		Rep. Yap (V.)	Promoting open access in data transmission, providing additional powers to the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC)	
			The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo, will deliberate further on HB 2871 in its next meeting.	

<p>Continuation... Information and Communications Technology (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>The NTC, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Internet Society Philippines (ISOC-PH), University of the Philippines (UP) Law Center, Federation of International Cable TV Associations of the Philippines (FICTAP), and the IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines (IBPAP), expressed their support for the bill.</p> <p>Some of the resource persons, however, suggested to study further the constitutionality of the bill's provision stating that businesses engaged in data transmission should not be considered as public utilities (Sec. 5, par. 2 of HB 2871).</p> <p>Ariel Tubayan, director for policy division of Globe Telecom, Inc., and Renato de Vera, senior manager of PLDT, Inc., objected to the proposed measure.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
<p>Natural Resources (Technical Working Group)</p>	<p>HBs 124, 212, 230, 610, 1990, 2116, 2362, 2632, 2789, 2986, 3167 & 3258</p> <p>HB 2573</p> <p>HBs 612, 678, 868,</p>	<p>Reps. Lobregat, Matugas, Deputy Speaker Singson, Reps. Eriguell, Ting, Pimentel, Bravo, Villarin, Rodriguez (I.), Mellana, Gonzalez, and Aglipay-Villar</p> <p>Rep. Rodriguez (M.)</p> <p>Reps. Roman, Eriguell, Yap</p>	<p>Declaring certain parts of the country as protected areas</p> <p>Declaring certain portions of Cagayan de Oro City to be known as the Cagayan de Oro-Iponan watershed as a protected area under the category of protected landscape and its peripheral areas as buffer zone, providing for its management</p> <p>Reclassifying parcels of land of the public domain located in certain parts of the country</p>	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Committee Secretary Raul Terso, met with representatives from the Forest Management Bureau (FMB), Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) and National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to discuss the technical description (TD) of 21 bills declaring protected areas, establishing forestland boundaries, and reclassifying lands in certain parts of the country.</p> <p>These bills were already approved by the Committee subject to the review and correction of the TD of the subject areas.</p> <p>NAMRIA approved the TD of the areas covered by HBs 124, 212, 230, 610, 1990, 2116, 2362, 2632, 2789, 2986, 3167 and 3258.</p> <p>As for HB 2573, NAMRIA will still review and evaluate the TD of the subject area to solve the issue on the overlapping of boundaries between the proposed Cagayan de Oro-Iponan watershed and nearby areas.</p> <p>NAMRIA promised to submit next week the result of its review of the technical</p>

Continuation... Natural Resources (Technical Working Group)	1343, 2050 & 3348 HBs 2938 & 3516	(V.), Acop, Durano, and Evardone Reps. Dalog and Mellana	Establishing the forestland boundary of Mountain Province and the Province of Agusan del Sur	description of the lands covered by HBs 612, 678, 868, 1343, 2050 and 3348. FMB will submit at a later date the result of its review of the TD of the forestlands covered by HBs 2938 and 3516.
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OTHER MATTERS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Metro Manila Development	Discussion on the planned establishment of a bus rapid transit (BRT) system in Metro Manila	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), listened to the presentation of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) on the bus rapid transit (BRT) system that will be established in Metro Manila.</p> <p>Robert Siy, DOTr senior adviser for planning, underscored the need to implement long term sustainable solutions to address the ever worsening traffic congestion in Metro Manila. He disclosed that based on the current growth of new vehicle registrations, there are about 500 additional vehicles in Metro Manila daily, which means that one new lane on EDSA should be added every 3.5 days.</p> <p>Apart from expanding and improving the country's railway systems, Siy said that one other major solution to the traffic crisis is the establishment of a BRT system, which can transport more passengers and will dramatically reduce travel time. BRT buses, running on dedicated lanes, can transport 1.6 million Metro Manila commuters daily, and up to 2.8 million with the addition of higher capacity buses.</p> <p>The central corridor BRT, which is the project's core component, spans a distance of 48.6 kilometers from Monumento in Caloocan City up to Diosdado Macapagal Avenue/Roxas Boulevard. Approved by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) last year, the BRT project is expected to be operational by 2020.</p> <p>Rep. Bayani Fernando (1st District, Marikina City) mentioned that during his term as the chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), he implemented a bus dispatching system which he said the DOTr can utilize for its transport projects.</p> <p>Rep. Castelo asked if there will be new buses for the BRT system. Siy answered that bus operators participating in the BRT project will have to provide buses according to the project specifications, such as having doors on both sides. Siy added that existing buses can still operate on other routes outside the BRT lanes.</p> <p>Noting that metro rails and stations are situated on the middle lanes of EDSA, Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon asked the DOTr how this will affect the BRT project as the latter intends to also use median lanes for its buses. Siy explained that BRT stations will be constructed under MRT stations which are mostly elevated. He added that it will be favorable for commuters who may need to use both the MRT and the BRT systems to get to their destination.</p> <p>When asked if consultation with transport groups were undertaken, Siy answered in the affirmative, adding that the industry is open to the idea of a BRT system.</p> <p>The Committee requested the DOTr to submit the list of proposed sites for the BRT stations. It will also invite bus operators to attend its next meeting.</p>