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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Basic Education and Culture	HB 1452	Rep. Belaro	Standardizing and regulating pre-schools and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Evelina Escudero (1 st District, Sorsogon), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate HBs 1452 and 3214.
	HB 3214	Rep. Escudero	Governing the system of preschool education by prescribing standards and regulations of preschool facilities and services	Rep. Escudero, author of HB 3214, underscored the need to establish a system governing and regulating preschool education in the country to promote quality preschool education, safeguard the welfare of children, and temper the rising cost of preschool education. Department of Education (DepEd) Assistant Secretary Tonisito Umali expressed no objection to the bills, but requested that the TWG consider the existing laws, such as RA 10410 or the Early Years Act of 2013 and RA 10157 or the Kindergarten Education Act, in its discussions. Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations (COCOPEA) Legal Counsel Joseph Noel Estrada said he is yet to consolidate the positions of their members on the proposed law. When asked by Rep. Lianda Bolilia (4 th District, Batangas) if the one year transitory period provided for in HB 3214 is enough to allow schools to comply with the requirements stated in the bill, Umali admitted that the period is too short. Nevertheless, he said the DepEd will conduct a study on the matter before presenting its recommendations to the Committee.
	HB 2950	Rep. Santos-Recto	Ensuring access to secondary education by converting all public elementary schools into integrated schools offering complete basic education	The Committee agreed to create a TWG to deliberate further on HB 2950. Umali has no objection to the bill, but he said the requirements for the conversion of schools should be met. Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Assistant Secretary Epimaco Densing III and Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) representative Louie Tangkia expressed support for the bill. ACT TEACHERS Party-List Rep. Antonio Tinio inquired if DepEd has a national plan that will

Continuation... Basic Education and Culture				<p>rationalize the conversion of schools.</p> <p>Umali answered that there is no centralized effort on the matter, but explained that the public schools in the country should be able to determine the need for conversion. He promised to submit to the Committee additional information relevant to the conversion of schools.</p>
Economic Affairs	Substitute Bill to HBs 69 & 2510	Reps. Salceda and Cua	Collective Investment Schemes (CIS) Law	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Arthur Yap (3rd District, Bohol), approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 69 and 2510 subject to style and amendment. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Rep. Yap requested Committee Vice Chair Joey Sarte Salceda (2nd District, Albay) to preside over the meeting, recognizing the latter's extensive knowledge of the bill's subject matter.</p> <p>Rep. Salceda, who is also the author of HB 69, agreed to the proposal to create a joint congressional oversight committee to monitor the implementation of the proposed law. He also requested the Secretariat to incorporate in the bill the recommendations and suggestions of the resource persons.</p>
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), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 646 in its next meeting. It agreed to conduct an ocular inspection of the APO plant in Malvar, Batangas.</p> <p>Rep. Aniceto "John" Bertiz III (Party-List, ACTS-OFW), author of HR 646, cited numerous complaints from travelers including overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) about the delayed release of passports. He said that the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has been unable to release passports at the appointed date. He emphasized that the resolution he filed seeks to look into these lapses so that remedial measures may be undertaken to solve these problems.</p> <p>DFA Assistant Secretary Frank Cimafranca reported that there is currently no backlog in the issuance of passports. He claimed that the DFA was able to address the 150,000 backlog in 2015 with the establishment of the e-passport (electronic passport) system.</p> <p>However, Cimafranca admitted that the period within which to process passports may take two to three months due to the huge volume of on-line applicants mostly coming from Metro Manila and nearby provinces.</p> <p>To address this problem, Cimafranca said that the DFA has already requested the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) for the establishment of DFA's satellite offices in strategic provinces.</p>

Continuation... Foreign Affairs				<p>The Presidential Communications Office (PCO) was requested to furnish the Committee with a copy of the reply of PCO Secretary Jose Ruperto Martin Andanan to the letter of DFA Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr. seeking the cancellation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the DFA and APO Production Unit Inc. (APO) due to the latter's alleged breach of agreement when it subcontracted the production of e-passports to a private entity.</p> <p>The DFA and APO entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the printing and production of e-passports. APO is a government instrumentality authorized to print accountable forms and sensitive high quality/volume orienting requirements, including e-passports. After the execution of the MOA, APO entered into a 10-year joint venture agreement with a private entity, United Graphic Expression Corporation (UGEC), for the production of the e-passports.</p> <p>The DFA and APO were requested to provide the Committee a copy of the contract and agreement executed by and between the two parties relative to the production of passports, as well as the company profile and list of shareholders of UGEC.</p>
Good Government and Public Accountability	HR 708	Rep. Bondoc	Inquiry into the grossly disadvantageous and highly irregular lease agreement between the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) and Vanderwood Management Corporation	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur), will deliberate further on the issues raised relative to HR 708 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Juan Pablo "Rimpy" Bondoc (4th District, Pampanga), author of HR 780, took PAGCOR to task for its violation of RA 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act relative to its P3.3 billion, 15-year lease contract with Vanderwood Management Corporation (VMC) for the use of a place where a casino gaming facility will be put up.</p> <p>He cited the audit report conducted by the Commission on Audit (COA) which found various irregularities in the project, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The premises to be leased was not yet existing at the time the contract was executed; • VMC is not the absolute owner of the property but a mere sub-lessee, hence it cannot be considered a "lessor" under existing laws and regulations; • The PAGCOR Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) considered VMC a qualified bidder despite the latter's non-compliance with some technical requirements of the bid. <p>Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1st District, Davao del Norte) chided PAGCOR for executing a lease contract with VMC and even</p>

<p>Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability</p>				<p>paying an amount of P234 million as advance rentals for a facility that was not yet existing at the time of the contract signing.</p> <p>Former PAGCOR President Cristino Naguiat claimed that the lease was supposed to commence at the time the property would be turned over to PAGCOR. He also said that the opinion of the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) was sought relative to the payment of advance rent.</p> <p>Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas (1st District, Ilocos Norte) questioned the propriety of putting up a casino within the Museo ng Maynila complex and inquired whether the City of Manila, the owner of the property, was informed about this lease agreement between PAGCOR and VMC.</p> <p>Rep. Salvador Belaro Jr. (Party-List, 1-ANG EDUKASYON) opined that the lease contract should be deemed void as the City of Manila's consent was not obtained.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Gwendolyn Garcia (3rd District, Cebu) asserted that PAGCOR violated the provisions of Republic Act 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Law.</p> <p>COA Director Wilfredo Agito disclosed that aside from Naguiat and VMC, the following PAGCOR Assistant Vice Presidents can also be held liable for the said irregularities: Recto Baltazar Jr., Milagros Pauline Visque, Sharon Quintanilla, and Evelyn Salvador.</p> <p>Former Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) President Dante Jimenez disclosed that VACC filed plunder and graft cases with the Department of Justice (DOJ) against Naguiat and other officials of PAGCOR and VMC.</p> <p>Speaker Alvarez advised VACC to file the case in the Office of the Ombudsman.</p> <p>The Committee will require the presence of the officers of Oceanville Hotel and Spa Corporation, the current lessee of the property in question, through the issuance of a subpoena. It will also invite PAGCOR Chair and President Andrea Domingo and Manila City Mayor Joseph Estrada in its next meeting.</p>
<p>Local Government</p>	<p>HB 85</p>	<p>Rep. Benitez</p>	<p>Establishing a separate city schools division office in the City of Victorias, Province of Negros Occidental, amending for the purpose Republic Act 8488, or the law converting the Municipality of Victorias into a component city</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Pedro Acharon Jr. (1st District, South Cotabato and General Santos City), approved HB 85.</p>
	<p>HB 936</p>	<p>Rep. Tiangco</p>	<p>Amending Section 55 of RA 9387 otherwise known as the Charter of the City of Navotas</p>	<p>The Committee approved HB 936.</p>

Continuation... Local Government	HB 1016	Deputy Speaker Abueg	Creating Panacan-2 into a regular barangay unit in the Municipality of Narra, Province of Palawan	The Committee approved HB 1016.
	HB 1219	Rep. Treñas	Reapportioning the lone legislative district and the <i>Sangguniang Panlungsod</i> of the City of Iloilo	The Committee approved HB 1219.
	HB 4678	Rep. Acharon	Creating the lone legislative district of the City of General Santos	The Committee approved HB 4678.
	HBs 248, 297,331, 1627 & 1958	Reps. Bordado, Suansing (H.), Romualdo, Castelo, and Tambunting	Changing the term of office of barangay officials and members of the <i>Sangguniang Kabataan</i>	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to reconcile and harmonize the five bills. The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1 st District, Nueva Ecija).
	HB 147	Rep. Gasataya	Reapportioning the lone legislative district of the City of Bacolod and thereby creating a new legislative district from such reapportionment	The Committee agreed to create a TWG to harmonize HBs 147 and 617. The TWG will be chaired by Bacolod City Rep. Greg Gasataya.
	HB 617	Rep. Paduano	Reapportioning the lone district and <i>Sangguniang Panlungsod</i> seats of the City of Bacolod	
	HB 4692	Rep. Albano	Reapportioning the current four legislative districts of the Province of Isabela to six legislative districts	The Committee agreed to create a TWG to deliberate further on HB 4692. The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Ma. Lourdes Aggabao (4 th District, Isabela).

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Human Rights (Technical Working Group)	HBs 61, 256, 1645 & 3938	Reps. Nograles (K.A.), Roque (H.), Villarica and Bag-ao	Providing a framework for the right to adequate food	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2nd District, Zambales), will deliberate further on the four bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>The TWG agreed on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following terms shall be redefined: food, hunger, and right to adequate food; • The provision requiring all government plans and projects promoting the right to adequate food to undergo a prior impact assessment shall just be included in the implementing rules and regulations (IRR); • The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) shall be included as among the implementing agencies; • The proposed Commission on the Right to Adequate Food, which shall be the primary policy-making and coordinating body that will guarantee full exercise of the right to adequate food, shall be placed under the

Continuation... Human Rights (Technical Working Group)				<p>Office of the President;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision creating an Inter-Agency Council on the Right to Adequate Food shall be deleted to avoid duplication of functions; The proposals of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Commission on Human Rights (CHR) pertinent to the penal provisions of the proposed law shall be adopted. <p>The stakeholders present were requested to submit their position papers on the bills within two weeks.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Mindanao Affairs	<p>Briefing by the following agencies on their FY 2018 proposed budget for Mindanao:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Maximo Rodriguez Jr. (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), listened to the presentation of three government agencies on their proposed budget for Mindanao for fiscal year 2018, which will be submitted to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).</p> <p>DOST Undersecretary for Regional Operations Brenda Nazareth-Manzano presented the DOST's 2018 budget proposal for Mindanao which amounts to P2.2 billion.</p> <p>The two programs that will receive the biggest share of the budget are the undergraduate and graduate scholarship programs of the DOST's Science Education Institute (SEI), at P643.48 million; and the repair/rehabilitation and construction of Philippine Science High School System (PSHS) buildings and facilities in the different regions in Mindanao, at P629.40 million. The rest of the budget will be allocated to various research and development (R&D) programs, upgrading or rehabilitation of regional offices and facilities, capacity building, and other programs of the DOST.</p> <p>Rep. Manuel Zubiri (3rd District, Bukidnon) questioned the meager budget projected by DOST for its malnutrition reduction program which is only P1 million. He suggested that the Department focus its resources on programs geared towards poverty alleviation.</p> <p>Rep. Alberto Ungab (3rd District, Davao City) said that all government agencies should conduct grassroots consultations before coming up with their annual budget proposals to identify and properly address the needs of the people on the ground.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Reps. Ungab, Ruwel Peter Gonzaga (2nd District, Compostela Valley), and Frederick Siao (Iligan City) asked the DOST to make its scholarship programs more accessible to the poor but deserving students.</p> <p>Rep. Gonzaga also called the attention of the DOST for its failure to comply with Section 10 of RA 7687 or the Science and Technology Scholarship Act of 1994, which mandates the DOST "to organize a program geared towards enlisting at least two scholars in each municipality and at least 10 scholars for those congressional districts without municipality."</p> <p>DTI Assistant Secretary Ameenah Fajardo reported that the Department's FY 2018 proposed budget for Mindanao is around P890 million, which is 29% higher than its current year's budget of P690.95 million.</p>

<p>Continuation... Mindanao Affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) 	<p>According to Fajardo, some of the major projects of DTI applicable in Mindanao include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Negosyo Center</i> – facilitates access to business services, such as business registration; • <i>Shared Service Facility</i> – assists micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) acquire tools and equipment specific to their trade; and • <i>Project Kapatid</i> – involves lectures by large corporations aimed at teaching MSMEs the different aspects of business operations, and linking qualified MSMEs to large companies' value chains. <p>Rep. Divina Grace Yu (1st District, Zamboanga del Sur) requested DTI to submit its detailed proposed budget for each region and district.</p> <p>DOLE Assistant Secretary Maria Gloria Tango presented DOLE's FY 2018 budget proposal for Mindanao amounting to P1.20 billion, which is 37% higher than its current year's budget of P875 million.</p> <p>The largest portion of the proposed budget goes to capital outlay (CO), P200.13 million; while the rest goes to the maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), P116.74 million; and personnel services (PS), P11.24 million.</p> <p>Rep. Wilter "Sharky" Wee Palma II (1st District, Zamboanga Sibugay) aired his concern about important capital outlay projects that were not included in the 2017 General Appropriations Act (GAA).</p> <p>Confirming the statement of Rep. Palma, Tango sought the help of the Committee in urging the DBM to include said projects in the FY 2018 budget for Mindanao.</p> <p>To facilitate matters, Rep. Zubiri suggested that Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (1stDistrict, Davao City), Chair of the Committee on Appropriations, be invited in the Committee's next meeting.</p> <p>The DOLE was requested to submit its comparative budget for Mindanao for FY 2017 and 2018, as well as its list of programs for 2018.</p> <p>The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Department of Tourism (DOT) conveyed to the Committee that their respective departments are still in the process of finalizing their budget proposal for 2018.</p>
<p>Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (Special Committee)</p>	<p>Briefing on the peace negotiations between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (GRP-NDFP)</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Tawi-Tawi Rep. Ruby Sahali, listened to the briefing conducted by GRP-NDFP panel chair and Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III on the status of the government's peace negotiations with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)/National People's Army (NPA)/NDFP and the gains of the past three rounds of peace talks.</p> <p>Rep. Sahali believed that the peace talks that transpired in Rome, Italy and in Oslo, Norway remain useful even though President Rodrigo Duterte had just called off and terminated the peace talks, saying that both panels were sincere and open in making known their respective positions on different key issues. She stated that the government and the CPP/NPA/NDFP need to stay open for peace talks in order to attain lasting and genuine peace in the country.</p> <p>Bello discussed the gains of the peace negotiations, which are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broke the five-year impasse (since June 2011) and re-opened the talks on the release of the detained political prisoners; • Accelerated the process for simultaneous negotiations;

<p>Continuation... Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (Special Committee)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed on common guidelines for the comprehensive agreement on socio economic reforms, political and constitutional reforms and end of hostilities and disposition of forces; • Declared unilateral and indefinite ceasefire; and • Reconstituted the Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantees' (JASIG) list. <p>Bello remains optimistic that a unilateral agreement is still possible and that the parties concerned can still go back to the negotiating table to work things out.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Jesus Nonato Sacdalan (1st District, North Cotobato), Bello said that the release of the political prisoners will not depend on the decision of the President, but will have to undergo a judicial process, noting that majority of the cases are pending in court and cannot be facilitated by the government.</p> <p>BAYAN MUNA Party-List Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate believes that the NDFP will not insist on the release of the political prisoners until the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and the International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) has been signed.</p> <p>The Committee will set another meeting on February 20, 2017 to continue with the discussion on the matter.</p>
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FORUM		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Natural Resources	Forum on mining and national industrialization	<p>The Committee, chaired by BAYAN MUNA Party-List Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate, conducted a forum on mining and national industrialization at the House of Representatives.</p> <p>Rep. Zarate welcomed the resource speakers and guests to the forum. He underscored the benefits of national industrialization in terms of developing the country's economy to become self-sustaining and free from external control.</p> <p>Dr. Perry Ong, director of the University of the Philippines (UP), Diliman Institute of Biology, and Dr. Edwino Fernando, curator of the UP Los Baños Museum of Natural History, discussed the Philippine environment situation.</p> <p>Ong described the Philippines' geological, geographical and geomorphological state, highlighting the country's vast resources as well as natural hazards.</p> <p>Fernando discussed the plants, particularly metallophytes, that thrive in mining sites and can tolerate high levels of heavy metals. The unusual tolerance for heavy metals and restricted distribution of metallophytes make them extremely relevant in any program aimed at restoring vegetation in mined-out areas and rehabilitating metal-contaminated lands. He also discussed phytomining, a process wherein vascular plants are used as crops in order to recover commercially valuable metals from the soil.</p> <p>Steel Asia Vice President Rafael Hidalgo presented the current state of the steel industry in the Philippines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the construction industry is supported by the steel industry, but not fully; • Almost all existing or potential manufacturing industries are unsupported or unlinked to the domestic steel industry; • Up and down the value chain, there are broken links and a

<p>Continuation... Natural Resources</p>		<p>reliance on imports;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The country's resources, such as iron ore and even scrap iron, are exported then brought back as finished goods, losing all the value-addition and jobs to China and other countries. <p>Hidalgo also presented the profile and achievements of Steel Asia, the Philippines' largest steel company that is in existence for the past 50 years.</p> <p>Saying that the country's steel industry is a vital element in national industrialization, Hidalgo hopes that it will get enough support from the government. He also suggests the rehabilitation of the National Steel Corporation in Iligan City to make it capable of manufacturing steel plates and other steel products that are mostly imported.</p> <p>Presenting the Philippine economic development program, IBON Foundation senior researcher Glenis Teresa Balangue said that it is important that the present administration declare national industrialization as a major strategy for Philippine development. Along this line, she said the government should review undue incentives being enjoyed by foreign corporations and give priority to Filipino manufacturers in government procurement.</p> <p>Balangue lamented that while the Philippines has a huge potential for development with its vast human and natural resources, it relies heavily on foreign produce and technologies. She added that many of the foreign goods and services the Philippines buy are actually produced using Filipino resources and manpower.</p> <p>Dr. Giovanni Tapang, chairperson of the AGHAM-Advocates of Science and Technology for the People, described the country's manufacturing industry as "weak, sluggish in terms of growth, and limited in terms of employment opportunities."</p> <p>Since the country's main industry is agriculture, Tapang said that national industrialization should be based on agrarian reform and a dynamic rural economy. He said the development of the mining industry should be included in the framework of national industrialization, but should uphold the rights and welfare of the people and the protection of the environment.</p> <p>An open forum followed after the presentations of the resource speakers.</p> <p>Asked by Rep. Zarate if the Philippines can compete with China's steel industry, Hidalgo replied in the affirmative, reiterating that it must have enough funding support both from the government and investors especially in putting up the required infrastructure.</p> <p>AKO-BICOL Party-List Rep. Rodel Batocabe inquired if there is still hope for the steel industry to prosper in the country, Steel Asia President and Chief Executive Officer Benjamin Yao said the prospects are high given the current strong demand for the product and the modern technologies available today.</p> <p>In closing, Rep. Zarate thanked the resource speakers and guests for their presence and participation in the forum. They were requested to submit their studies and proposals on how to further enhance national industrialization as a major strategy for development.</p>
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