

# Committee Daily Bulletin



17<sup>th</sup> Congress  
First Regular Session

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. I No. 74  
February 15, 2017

COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agrarian Reform	HB 555	Rep. Casilao	Instituting genuine agrarian reform in the country and creating a mechanism for its implementation	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rene Relampagos (1<sup>st</sup> District, Bohol), will deliberate further on HB 555 in its next meeting.</p> <p>HB 555, authored by ANAKPAWIS Party-List Rep. Ariel "Ka Ayik" Casilao, proposes a free land distribution to all qualified beneficiaries and seeks to institutionalize a program of state support and subsidy to land reform beneficiaries in all aspects of agricultural production.</p> <p>The proposed new agrarian reform law, also known as the Genuine Agrarian Reform Act, will cover all agricultural lands, rendering land conversion illegal, and revoking all previous decrees on land exemption and exclusion.</p> <p>Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Rafael Mariano, who is a staunch supporter of this measure, said that allowing the free distribution of land to farmers is seen to end social injustice and armed conflicts in the country.</p> <p>Mariano went on to say that the present administration has included the Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill (GARB) in its priority legislative agenda for the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress.</p> <p>The representatives from the Departments of Agriculture (DA), Justice (DOJ), and Trade and Industry (DTI), Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), and the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) expressed support for the bill.</p> <p>Also supportive of the proposed law were the <i>Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas</i>, (KMP), <i>Masang Magbubukid</i>, Task Force Mapalad, Inc., <i>Katipunan ng mga Samahang Magbubukid sa Timog Katagalugan</i> (KASAMA-TK), <i>Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon</i> (AMGL), <i>Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura</i> (UMA), <i>Alyansa ng Manggagawang Bukid sa Asyenda Luisita</i> (AMBALA), <i>Agumang Ding Manglalautang, Capampangan</i> (AMC), KAISAHAN, <i>Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas</i> (PAMALAKAYA), <i>Kilusang Mayo Uno</i> (KMU), National Network of Agrarian Reform Advocates (NARRA-Youth), Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, UP Sinagbayan, and the National Federation of Women.</p>

Continuation... Agrarian Reform				The resource persons present were requested to submit their position paper on the bill.
Civil Service and Professional Regulation	HB 2310	Rep. Escudero	Regulating the practice of food technology in the Philippines, creating for the purpose the Board of Food Technology, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Vilma Santos-Recto (6 <sup>th</sup> district, Batangas), directed the Secretariat to prepare the substitute bill, incorporating therein the recommendations of the Department of Agriculture (DA), Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), and Philippine Association of Food Technologists, Inc. (PAFT).
	HB 2726	Rep. Alejano	Providing for the registration, licensure and practice of food technology in the Philippines and providing funds therefor	Rep. Evelina Escudero (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Sorsogon), author of HB 2310, informed the Committee that her bill contains the same provisions as the bill approved during the 16 <sup>th</sup> Congress and that the Senate has just approved a similar bill, SB 1269 or the Food Technology Act of 2017, authored by Senator Antonio "Sonny" Trillanes.  Dr. Lara Navarro, head of the Standards Development Division of the DA's Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards, and Dr. Maria Leonora Francisco, PAFT president, interposed no objection to the passage of the proposed law.
	HB 1123	Rep. Alejano	Regulating the practice of criminology profession in the Philippines and appropriating funds therefor, repealing for the purpose RA 6506, or the law creating the Board of Examiners for Criminologists in the Philippines	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG), to be headed by Rep. Divina Grace Yu (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Zamboanga del Sur), to study further the provisions of HB 1123.  Atty. Lovelika Bautista, Officer-in-Charge of the Office of the Professional Regulatory Boards, Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), and Atty. Ramil Gabao, chairperson of the Board of Criminologists, manifested their support for the bill.  The Committee requested the resource persons present to submit their position papers on the bill.
	HBs 1125, 1273, 2287, 2744, 2839, 2870, 2988, 3078, 3331, 3435, 4544, & 4871	Reps. Alejano, Biazon, Sy-Alvarado, Cagas, Baguilat, Yap (V.), Deputy Speaker Andaya, Reps. Suansing (E.), Noel, Herrera-Dy, Rodriguez (M.), and Vargas	Granting security of tenure to casual/temporary/contractual/co-terminous government employees who have rendered the prescribed years of service	The Committee agreed to create a TWG, to be headed by Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT TEACHERS), to deliberate further on the 13 bills.  Jennifer Timbol, Director III of the Human Resource Policies and Standards Office, Civil Service Commission (CSC), said that the CSC opposes the grant of civil service eligibility to government employees on the basis of the number of years they served in government.  Timbol also explained that the grant of civil service eligibility does not equate to security of tenure as what the bills suggest. She surmised that the problem might be the lack of plantilla positions that would accommodate contractual or temporary employees.
	HB 3465	Rep. Roman	Mandating all government agencies, offices and instrumentalities to evaluate and consider qualified contractual workers for appointment to permanent positions	However, Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Director Ryan Lita said that the thrust of the government is towards "rightsizing," which will involve abolishing unnecessary positions in the government and

Continuation... Civil Service and Professional Regulation				<p>creating those that are extremely needed. Currently, Lita said, there are at least 200,000 unfilled positions in the government.</p> <p>Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1<sup>st</sup> District, Nueva Ecija) asked the CSC why it opposes the grant of eligibility to government employees when in fact it grants eligibility to barangay officials. Timbol said that the grant of eligibility to barangay officials is an act of goodwill by the government for the “voluntary services” rendered by barangay officials to the community.</p> <p>The CSC grants Barangay Official Eligibility (BOE) to barangay officials who have rendered at least one term of office in one barangay pursuant to CSC Memorandum Circular No. 13 series of 2012. Said eligibility is equivalent to a career service subprofessional eligibility suitable for first level positions in the government.</p> <p>COURAGE National President Ferdinand Gaité asserted that the grant of civil service eligibility should also be extended to employees whose appointments are based on memorandum of agreement, contract, or job order.</p> <p>Employees association and union groups, namely, Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (PSLINK), Philippine Government Employees Association (PGEA), and the Confederation of Independent Unions in the Public Sector (CIU), manifested their support for the proposed measures.</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit their position papers on the bills.</p>
Ecology	Substitute Bill to HBs 3577, 983, 1966, 2655, 3130, 3579, 3801, 4181, 4183, 4626 & 4542, HRs 330 & 370	Reps. Suansing (E.), Fortun, Campos, Revilla, Deputy Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo, Reps. Castelo, Tambunting, Deputy Speaker Andaya, Reps. Rodriguez (M.), Relampagos, and Pineda	Regulating the production, importation, sale, provision, use, recovery, collection, recycling, and disposal of plastic products	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Nueva Ecija), approved the substitute bill, with amendment, and the corresponding Committee Report.
	<i>Motu Proprio</i> Investigation		Inquiry into the adverse environmental impact of mining operations in the country	<p>The Committee deferred its inquiry on the ill-effects of mining in the country.</p> <p>Noting the failure of Secretary Gina Lopez of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to honor the Committee’s invitation to attend today’s meeting, the Committee agreed to send her another invitation</p>

Continuation... Ecology				requiring her presence in the next meeting, otherwise a subpoena will be issued to her.
Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous People	HB 2886	Deputy Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Strengthening the healthcare system in cultural and indigenous communities by institutionalizing the training and employment of tribal health workers	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Nancy Catamco (2<sup>nd</sup> District, North Cotabato), approved HB 2886 with amendment. The bill will be forwarded to the Committee on Appropriations for review of its funding provision.</p> <p>Among the amendments agreed upon during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be one tribal health worker (THW) for every 20 families in a tribal community;</li> <li>• The expenses for the health insurance and hospitalization of THWs shall be sourced from the revenues collected from excise tax on cigarettes;</li> <li>• The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) shall be tasked to monitor the overall implementation of the proposed law, confirm the identity of the THWs that were duly appointed by the tribal chiefs, and draft the proposed law's implementing rules and regulations (IRR), together with the other agencies concerned; and</li> <li>• The THWs shall be provided scholarships in health care training programs accredited by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).</li> </ul>
	HB 4261	Deputy Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Amending Section 53 of RA 8371 or the law recognizing, protecting and promoting the rights of indigenous cultural communities/indigenous peoples, creating a National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, establishing implementing mechanisms and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to study the bill further.</p> <p>The resource persons were asked to submit their position papers and recommendations on the bill.</p>
Labor and Employment	HB 4328	Rep. Tambunting	Establishing reforms in the regulation of collective bargaining agreement (CBA) of management and employees' bargaining unit in an establishment, thereby amending Section 253-A of Presidential Decree 442, as amended or the Labor Code of the Philippines	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Randolph Ting (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Cagayan), will deliberate further on HB 4328 in another meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Gus Tambunting (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Parañaque City), said that his bill, HB 4328, seeks to shorten the effectivity of the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) from five to three years. He added that under the proposed law, workers will have the opportunity to choose their rightful bargaining representative and negotiate with the employers the most beneficial terms and conditions of work at a fixed limited period of time.</p> <p>However, representatives from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP), and Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) prefer to maintain the existing five-year duration of the CBA, arguing that shortening the period may cause work disruption.</p>

Continuation... Labor and Employment				<p>The DOLE was requested to submit data showing the number of labor-related strikes before and after 1989 when RA 6715 was enacted.</p> <p>RA 6715 amends certain provisions of the Labor Code to provide better protection to workers; strengthen workers' rights to self-organization, collective bargaining and peaceful mass actions; promote voluntary modes of dispute settlement; and reorganize the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC).</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
	HB 4446	Rep. Mendoza	Establishing an efficient system to strengthen workers' right to self-organization and collective bargaining, amending for the purpose PD 442	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 4446 in another meeting.</p> <p>TUCP Party-List Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza, author of HB 4446, emphasized that removing the requirements for registration of local union chapters is an efficient and expeditious administrative mechanism to promote and guarantee full respect for the freedom of association and collective bargaining of workers.</p> <p>Representatives from DOLE and ECOP expressed objection to certain provisions of the bill. On the other hand, labor group NAGKAISA expressed its support for the proposed law.</p> <p>For its next meeting, the Committee will invite the National Conciliation and Mediation Board (NCMB) to give its comments on the bill.</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit their position papers on the proposed law.</p>
Legislative Franchises	Substitute Bill to HB 1941	Rep. Espino	Granting the Gulf Waves Communications Corporation a franchise to construct, install, establish, operate and maintain radio and television broadcasting stations throughout the Philippines	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Franz "Chicoy" Alvarez (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Palawan), approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HB 1941.
	Substitute Bill to HB 4464	Deputy Speaker Hernandez	Renewing the franchise granted to Subic Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) under Republic Act 7511 or the law granting the SBC a franchise to construct, install, operate and maintain radio and television broadcasting stations in the Philippines for another 25 years	The Committee approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HB 4464.
	HB 1422	Rep. Cosalan	Renewing the franchise granted to Satellite Paging Systems Philippines, Inc. (SPSPI) (presently known as Now Telecom Company, Inc.) under RA 7301, as amended by RA 7940, or the law granting SPSPI a franchise to construct, establish, operate and maintain radio paging systems and trunked radio systems within the Philippines for a period of 25 years renewable for another 25 years from the effectivity of the Act	The Committee approved HB 1422.

Continuation... Legislative Franchises	HB 3864	Rep. Go	Amending and renewing the franchise granted to Beta Broadcasting System, Inc. to construct, install, establish, operate and maintain radio broadcasting stations in the Philippines	The Committee approved HB 3864, with amendment.
	HB 4668	Rep. Romualdo	Renewing the franchise granted to Sarraga Integrated and Management Corporation (SIAM) under RA 7478 to construct, install, operate, and maintain for commercial purposes, radio and television broadcasting stations in the Philippines	The Committee approved HB 4668.
	HB 4849	Rep. Belmonte (R.)	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Omninet Philippines, Inc. under RA 7298 or the law granting the Omninet a franchise to establish, install, maintain, lease and operate wire and/or wireless telecommunication systems, lines, circuits and stations within the Philippines	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 4849 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Deputy Commissioner Edgardo Cabarios of the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) interposed no objection to the bill.</p> <p>On the other hand, Ann Kathleen Gatdula, legal counsel of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), reported that Omninet has not filed its financial statement for the period 2010 to 2015, and its general information sheet (GIS) from 2011 to 2015.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Surigao del Sur) on the implication of a corporation's non-compliance with documentary requirements, SEC General Counsel Camilo Correa answered that a corporation may be considered non-operational if it fails to file its financial statement for five consecutive years. This, according to Correa, is a ground for suspension or revocation of its registration with SEC.</p> <p>Reps. Pimentel and Joaquin Chipeco Jr. (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Laguna) said franchise applicants should comply with the requirements of SEC before the Committee could consider their franchise renewal application.</p> <p>Omninet Chair and President Ruby Tan promised to immediately submit her company's financial statements and GIS to SEC.</p>
Muslim Affairs	HB 968	Rep. Turabin-Hataman	Declaring the first day of February of every year as National Hijab Day	<p>The Committee, chaired by AMIN Party-List Rep. Sitti Djalila Turabin-Hataman, reconsidered its previous approval of HB 968 to rectify an error in the sequencing of its provisions.</p> <p>Thereafter, the Committee finally approved HB 968 with amendment. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.</p>
Public Information	Consolidated Bill on HBs 32, 63, 75, 77, 112, 120, 127, 161, 224, 237, 251, 330, 334, 463,	Reps. Del Mar, Nograles (K.A.), Vargas, Aglipay-Villar, Baguilat, Tan (A.), Tambunting,	Strengthening the people's right to information	<p>The Committee, chaired by ACT TEACHERS Party-List Rep. Antonio Tinio, approved the consolidated bill on the 35 measures, subject to style.</p> <p>The consolidated bill will be forwarded to the Committee on Appropriations for its approval of the bill's funding provision.</p>

Continuation... Public Information	560, 903, 973, 1055, 1121, 1251, 1654, 1855, 1873, 2269, 2284, 2309, 2331, 2773, 2853, 3022, 3783, 3950 & 4020, HR 153 & Privilege Speech 23	Belmonte (J.C.), Roque (H.), Almonte, Bordado, Romualdo, Zarate, Tugna, Castelo, Fortuno, Fortun, Antonino, Alejano, Biazon, Angara- Castillo, Aragones, Montoro, Bag- ao, Villarin, Cojuangco, Villafuerte, Rocamora, Deputy Speaker Cayetano, Reps. Escudero, Suansing (E.), and Atienza		
Reforestation (Special Committee)	HR 382	Rep. Yu	Inquiry into the alleged irregularities and wrong policies in the implementation of the National Greening Program (NGP) with the end in view of assessing the effectivity of the program	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Noel Villanueva (3<sup>rd</sup>District, Tarlac), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 382 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Before the Committee's deliberations on HR 382, Director Ricardo Calderon of the Forest Management Bureau (FMB), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), gave a briefing on the government's National Greening Program (NGP).</p> <p>The NGP, implemented by virtue of Executive Order (EO) 26 issued on February 24, 2011, is a multi-billion peso project which aims to grow 1.5 billion trees in 1.5 million hectares nationwide within a period of six years or from 2011 to 2016. The program is anchored on the government's goal of reducing poverty, ensuring food security, conserving the environment and biodiversity, and enhancing climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>From 2011 to 2013, Calderon reported that nearly 400 million seedlings were planted in over 600,000 hectares of land nationwide, recording about 46% accomplishment. By end of 2015, about 1.4 million hectares of land have been planted under the NGP.</p> <p>Calderon said another executive order, EO 193, was issued in November 2015 expanding the coverage of the NGP and extending its implementation from 2016 to 2028.</p> <p>Asked by ABANG LINGKOD Party-List Rep. Jose Stephen Paduano on the sustainability of the NGP, Calderon expressed the hope that with</p>

Continuation... Reforestation (Special Committee)				<p>the active participation of local government units (LGUs) and upland communities, along with the grant of incentives, the program will surely be a success.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Divina Grace Yu (1<sup>st</sup> District, Zamboanga del Sur) if the program was able to achieve the goal of reducing poverty, Calderon replied in the affirmative, citing positive testimonies from the program beneficiaries.</p> <p>Professor Perry Ong of the Institute of Biology of the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman commented that in order to achieve the program's objective of restoring the country's forest, it is important to plant trees that will suit each type of forest, adding that there are 12 such types.</p> <p>The FMB was requested to submit to the Committee its report on the utilization of funds for the NGP for the period 2011 to 2016. On the other hand, the Commission on Audit (COA) was requested to provide the Committee a copy of its audit findings relative to the NGP's implementation.</p>
Ways and Means	HB 4688	Rep. Salceda	Amending Sections 22, 24, 31, 32, 34, 35, 79, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 148 and Title VI of RA 8424, otherwise known as the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua, will deliberate further on HBs 4688 and 4774 in another meeting.</p> <p>The Committee focused its discussion on the use of electronic sales reporting system and the establishment of electronic interconnectivity among concerned government agencies, which are provided for in HB 4774.</p>
	HB 4774	Rep. Cua	Amending Sections 6, 22, 24, 25, 31, 33, 34, 79, 84, 86, 99, 106, 107, 108, 109, 113, 116, 148, 149, 155, 232, 237 and 288; creating new Sections 148-A, 237-A, 264-A and 264-B; and repealing Sections 35 and 62 of RA 8424	<p>Department of Finance (DOF) Undersecretary Karl Chua expressed the Department's support for the bills which aim to ensure better spending through earmarking of funds; enhance the tax administration through the use of electronic receipts (e-receipts), and interconnectivity and data sharing among government agencies; and relax the bank secrecy regulation to cover certain criminal cases.</p> <p>Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon said that during his term as Bureau of Customs (BOC) commissioner, interconnectivity among government agencies was established through the National Single Window (NSW) System, but was stopped when he left the BOC.</p> <p>Under the NSW, government agencies like the BOC issues e-permits/clearances under a fast and highly secured environment, which lowers regulatory costs, improves revenue collection, and prevents fraud associated with manual filing, processing and issuance of permits or clearances.</p> <p>National Tax Research Center (NTRC) Executive Director Trinidad Rodriguez explained that the NSW system was stopped because of the incompatibility of the systems being used by the</p>

Continuation... Ways and Means				<p>different government agencies involved in the program.</p> <p>Chua said that the DOF and its attached agencies have already formed a technical working group to resolve the matter.</p> <p>Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Commissioner Caesar Dulay apprised the Committee of BIR's tax collection efforts and its campaign against tax evaders and erring BIR personnel.</p> <p>Dulay also disclosed that BIR is currently operating with only 50% of its total workforce because of the resignation or early retirement of 300 of its personnel who might have been affected by his announcement of an intensified drive to curb graft and corruption inside the BIR.</p> <p>BIR Deputy Commissioner for Operations Nestor Valeroso added that the country's revenue collections have significantly improved even though collection efficiency ratio has remained at 10.9% in 2016.</p> <p>However, Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Albay), author of HB 4688, pointed out that an estimated P400 billion tax gap does not signify efficiency as claimed by the BIR. He blamed the tax gap to tax evaders among high income earners, where 50% of their supposed tax dues go instead to corrupt authorities and to their lawyers.</p>
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ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Reforestation (Special Committee)	Approval of the Committee's Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Noel Villanueva (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Tarlac), adopted its Rules of Procedure for the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress.</p> <p>The Committee has general jurisdiction over "all matters directly and principally relating to policies and programs on reforestation including the effects of forest denudation, and other actions to ensure the implementation of a sustained community-based nationwide reforestation program."</p>

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Government Enterprises and Privatization (Technical Working Group)	HBs 59, 136, 361, 471, 734, 871, 1017, 1087, 1097, 1608, 1671, 1780, 1880, 1989, 2565, 2569, 3127, 3453, 4205, 4641,	Reps. Tinio, Batocabe, Zamora (M.C.), Escudero, Espina, Bataoil, Lanete, Castelo, Cagas, Revilla, Catamco, Treñas, Ting, Palma,	Proposing amendments to RA 8291 or the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) Act of 1997	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Antonio Tinio (Party-List, ACT TEACHERS), will deliberate further on the 23 bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Tinio informed the body that a bill with similar subject matter was passed on third reading during the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress and had the concurrence of GSIS. This bill was refiled this 17<sup>th</sup> Congress as HB</p>

Continuation... Government Enterprises and Privatization (Technical Working Group)	4732, 4733 & 4746	Rodriguez (M.), Primicias-Agabas, Villarín, Panotes, and Salceda		471, authored by Rep. Tinio himself.  When asked if the GSIS' previous proposals still remain, GSIS Officer-in-Charge and Senior Vice President Nora Malubay-Saludares answered in the affirmative, adding that the agency has long awaited the approval of the bill.  The GSIS was requested to submit the following documents before the next TWG meeting on March 15 : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study on the effect of lowering the optional retirement age of government employees on the actuarial life of GSIS; and</li> <li>• Report on GSIS' revenues including its income derived from re-insurance or the insurance it purchased from other insurance companies.</li> </ul>
Government Reorganization jt. w/ Overseas Workers Affairs (Technical Working Group)	HBs 227, 288, 543, 822, 1936, 2334 & 4899	Deputy Speaker Singson, Reps. Romero, Arenas, Yap (A.), Villar, Cojuangco, and Castelo	Creating the Department of Overseas Filipino Workers, defining its powers and functions, and appropriating funds therefor	The technical working group (TWG), co-chaired by Rep. Aniceto "John" Bertiz III (Party-List, ACTS-OFW) for the Committee on Government Reorganization, and Rep. Mariano Michael Velarde Jr. (Party-List, BUHAY) for the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs, will deliberate further on the nine bills in its next meeting.
	HBs 192 & 3255	Reps. Bertiz and Aglipay-Villar	Creating the Department of Migration and Development, defining its powers and functions, and appropriating funds therefor	The TWG agreed to use HB 192 as its working draft, giving weight to the creation of a Department of Migration and Development instead of a Department of Overseas Filipino Workers.  Rep. Bertiz, author of HB 192, explained that the proposal to create a Department of Migration and Development is a product of several consultations made with stakeholders. The aim is to reintegrate the migration and development agenda of the government with the skills and potentials of all overseas Filipinos, not just overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), and utilize them in building the nation.  Rep. Bertiz lamented the concerted effort of the executive department to oppose the proposed measures without any recommendation. He was referring to the unified position paper submitted by the executive department objecting to the creation of a new department for OFWs.  Representatives from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) present during the meeting affirmed their respective offices' objection to create another department that will cater to the needs of OFWs.  On the other hand, Engineer Francisco Aguilar Jr. of the Filipino Migrant Workers Group and

Continuation... Government Reorganization jt. w/ Overseas Workers Affairs (Technical Working Group)				<p>Venecio Legaspi of the OFW Council of Leaders in Jeddah expressed their support for the proposed law.</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit their position papers on the bills.</p>
Transportation (Technical Working Group)	HB 1029	Rep. Manalo	Establishing the scope and procedure for Philippine ship registry, recognition and enforcement of maritime claims and limitation of liability as well as providing essential incentives, which collectively will promote a comprehensive and orderly Philippine ship registry system for the regulation of vessels carrying the flag state	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by ANGKLA Party-List Rep. Jesulito "Jess" Manalo, will deliberate further on HBs 1029 and 1288 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Manalo, who is also the author of HB 1029, underscored the positive effect on the economy of encouraging more ship owners in other parts of the world to register their vessels under the Philippine flag.</p>
	HB 1288	Rep. Baguilat	Providing for the registration of ships and incentives therefor	<p>Rep. Gavini "Apol" Pancho (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Bulacan) expressed support for the bills saying that these would make the shipping industry more competitive and provide jobs to more Filipino seafarers.</p> <p>The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) and the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) expressed support for the proposed law.</p> <p>Also supporting the bills were Filipino Seafarers Association (FSA) President Roy Alampay; Director Jay Batongbacal of the Institute of Maritime Affairs and Laws of the Sea, University of the Philippines (UP) College of Law; and International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) Vice Chair Gerardo Borromeo.</p> <p>Alampay and Batongbacal said that reforms on maritime laws are necessary to keep them attuned to the modern times and help Filipino shippers become globally competitive.</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
Veterans Affairs and Welfare (Technical Working Group)	HR 53	Rep. Alejano	Review of RA 8220 or the law creating the ranks of chief master sergeant/master chief petty officer and senior master sergeant/senior chief petty officer in the enlisted ranks of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to resolve the alleged discrepancies in the interpretation of the computation of the pension of retired chief master sergeants and senior master sergeants	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by MAGDALO Party-List Rep. Gary Alejano, will deliberate further on HR 53 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Alejano said that a group of retired chief master sergeants and senior master sergeants observed some discrepancies in the amount of pension they were receiving and would like to seek clarification on the basis used by the AFP in computing the pension.</p> <p>Retired Second Lieutenant Nestor Moreto, representative of the Association of Retired Philippine Air Force Enlisted Personnel (ARPAFEP), informed the TWG that the retirees discovered the discrepancy when they found out that two retired enlisted men, with the same rank and with an active service of more than 34 years, have been receiving different amounts of pension.</p>

<p>Continuation... Veterans Affairs and Welfare (Technical Working Group)</p>			<p>Moreto further said that when his group referred the matter to the AFP Pension and Gratuity Management Center (PGMC), the retirees learned that their interpretation of Section 6 of RA 8220 is different from that of the AFP PGMC, which explains the difference in the computation of the pension and gratuity.</p> <p>Section 6 of RA 8220 provides the basis for computing the pension and gratuity of enlisted personnel who attain the rank of master sergeant, senior master sergeant, and chief master sergeant upon retirement.</p> <p>Rep. Alejano said that it is necessary to refer to the records of the bicameral conference committee meeting on RA 8220 so that its implementation will be consistent with the intent of the framers of the law.</p> <p>The PGMC and Finance Center of the AFP were requested to craft a policy recommendation to harmonize the different interpretations of RA 8220.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Muslim Affairs	<p>Briefing by the following government agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Budget and Management (DBM)</li> <li>• Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee, chaired by AMIN Party-List Rep. Sitti Djalia Turabin-Hataman, listened to the briefing conducted by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF).</p> <p>Director (OIC) Evelyn Peralta of the DBM's Budget Management Bureau discussed the two tier budget approach (2TBA) and the guiding principles in the preparation of the agencies' annual budget.</p> <p>The 2TBA budgeting separates the discussion of an agency's proposed budget for existing programs and projects from the proposed budget for new programs and expansion of existing programs and activities.</p> <p>Under Tier 1, Peralta said, the DBM and the concerned agency shall agree on the resources that will be required to continue implementing on-going and previously approved programs and projects. Under Tier 2, the resources available are allocated to new programs and projects or to scale up activities in terms of scope, beneficiaries, design or implementation schedule.</p> <p>ARMM Executive Secretary Laisa Masuhod-Alamia discussed the achievements of the ARMM.</p> <p>Under the ARMM's good governance and anti-corruption program, Masuhod-Alamia was proud to say that the Department of Education (DepEd)-ARMM was able to secure the benefits due to more than 25,000 of its teachers through the settlement of its P2.72 billion indebtedness with the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS).</p> <p>In the international arena, Masuhod-Alamia reported that ARMM Governor Mujiv Hataman was conferred the Outstanding Governorship Award in 2013 and 2014 by the Superbrands Marketing Incorporated (SMI), an organization founded in 1994 in the United</p>

<p>Continuation... Muslim Affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF)</li> </ul>	<p>Kingdom with 90 member countries; and was a recipient of the 2014 Eisenhower Fellowships' Multi-Nation Program, a one-and-a-half-month leadership program that brings together 25 prominent professionals from around the world. In the local scene, according to Masuhod-Alamia, Hataman was one of the awardees of the "Bulong Pulungan," a media forum organized in 1986 by a group of women journalists.</p> <p>NCMF Executive Director Tahir Lidasan discussed the NCMF's proposed budget and programs and projects for FY 2018.</p> <p>Lidasan said that the NCMF proposes a budget of P109.36 million for general administration and support, including the construction of the Muslim youth centers in North Luzon; the procurement of vehicles and other capital outlay requirements; and human resource development programs.</p> <p>With regard to the FY 2018 budget for support to operations, Lidasan said the NCMF has proposed the amount of P26.62 million for research and development and information systems management, and P6 million for policy and advisory services.</p>
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Update on the status of the following rail projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Light Rail Transit (LRT) Line 1 Cavite Extension Project</li> <li>LRT-Metro Rail Transit (MRT) common station</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, continued its discussion with concerned government agencies on the status and issues affecting the implementation of the government's rail projects.</p> <p>Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) Administrator Reynaldo Berroya reported that the agreement on the acquisition of the right-of-way (ROW) for the LRT Line 1 Cavite Extension was already signed.</p> <p>Light Rail Manila Corporation (LRMC) President Rogelio Singson reported that LRMC can now proceed with the project which is expected to be finished by 2020. Singson added that the ground breaking ceremony will be held on March 6, 2017.</p> <p>LRMC was requested to furnish the Committee with a copy of its concession agreement with the government.</p> <p>Department of Transportation (DOTr) Senior Project Development Officer Timothy John Batan discussed the salient provisions of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) entered into by the DOTr with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the private corporations relative to the implementation of the P2.8 billion LRT-MRT common station project.</p> <p>Batan said that the passengers' comfort and ease of transfer are the primary considerations of the project, adding that commuters will only have to walk between 50 and 200 meters to get to their train using the common station.</p> <p>Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1<sup>st</sup> District, Davao del Norte), who was present during the meeting, emphasized the importance of the common rail station project in the government's effort to address the traffic problem in Metro Manila. He said the project is long overdue and has to be implemented immediately, but it has to be done with the interest of the common people as the primordial concern.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento, along with Deputy Speaker Gwendolyn Garcia (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Cebu) and other Members of the Committee, called for a review of the MOA to look into its legality as well as to determine if the terms of the agreement are advantageous to the government and the interest of the public.</p> <p>On Singson's current position as LRMC president, Speaker Alvarez</p>

