

Committee Daily Bulletin

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First Regular Session

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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Dangerous Drugs	HR 456 & Privilege Speech Nos. 84 & 88	Rep. Jalosjos	Investigation into the illegal drug trading activities in the Province of Zamboanga del Norte	<p>The Committee, chaired by Robert "Ace" Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 456 and two Privilege Speeches in another meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Barbers said that the objective of this investigation is to determine whether there are loopholes in the law, particularly RA 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act, which will necessitate the enactment of a remedial or amendatory law.</p> <p>Based on HR 456 and the two privilege speeches he delivered on the floor, Rep. Seth Frederick Jalosjos (1st District, Zamboanga del Norte) decried the proliferation of the illegal drug trade in the Province of Zamboanga del Norte perpetrated by no less than the top local chief executive and officials of the Philippine National Police (PNP) assigned in the province.</p> <p>Once again, witness Rolly Daligdig related what he knew about the illegal drug trade and other criminal activities in the province, reiterating the alleged involvement of the governor of Zamboanga del Norte, the mayors of the Municipality of Polanco and Dipolog City, and some police officials in the area.</p> <p>Asked by Rep. Jalosjos why Daligdig came to seek the assistance of Congress, the latter said that he fears for his life knowing that two of his partners in the so-called Team DAVID, an alleged "death squad," have been killed.</p> <p>Backing up Daligdig's revelations with their own testimonies on the matter were Roger Daligdig, brother of Rolly, Ronald Realiza, and Police Officer Armando Viola. The four are all under the Witness Protection Program of the government.</p> <p>Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" Teves Jr. (3rd District, Negros Oriental) asked about the status of the police officers who were allegedly involved in the illegal drug trading activities in the province.</p> <p>PNP Region 9 Regional Director Billy Beltran said that they are still in active duty. He explained that there is no order from the</p>

Continuation... Dangerous Drugs				<p>National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) that they be relieved from duty.</p> <p>NAPOLCOM Chief of Staff Neopolo Casurao Jr. said that NAPOLCOM has not received any complaint regarding the police officers who were allegedly involved in the illegal drug trade in Zamboanga del Norte. But he said NAPOLCOM will conduct its own investigation on the matter based on the testimonies of the witnesses in today's hearing.</p> <p>Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Assistant Secretary Rico Judge Janvier Echiverri and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Deputy Director Ferdinand Lavin said that they will also conduct their own investigations regarding the allegations of Daligdig.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Barbers relative to the alleged killing of Team DAVID members Crisanto Gulang and his live-in partner, Jeanette Acevedo, while in the custody of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), PDEA Regional Director Joseph Ladip said that he is not at liberty to comment on the issue because the incident is already under investigation.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to hold an executive session to hear the report of PDEA relative to the illegal drug trade in Zamboanga del Norte.</p>
Games and Amusements	HR 165	Rep. Atienza	Investigation into the online or electronic games (e-games)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Gus Tambunting (2nd District, Parañaque City), discussed the issues relative to HR 165.</p> <p>BUHAY Party-List Rep. Jose Atienza Jr., author of HR 165, said that with the proliferation of online or electronic games (e-games), it is best to determine how e-games are supervised or regulated and how much is being collected from their operations in terms of taxes.</p> <p>Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) Assistant Vice President Ramon Gelvezon informed the Committee that PAGCOR closely monitors the operations of all gaming sites to ensure compliance with its rules and ensures that operators pay the corresponding tax.</p> <p>Gelvezon reported that due to the stringent policies and guidelines by the new PAGCOR management, the number of PAGCOR-authorized e-games throughout the country has decreased from 316 last July 1, 2016 to 244 as of February 17 of this year.</p> <p>He also denied the allegations that government employees and students can access online gaming, explaining that they are restricted by law from playing the e-games and that only registered players are allowed to play.</p>

Continuation... Games and Amusements	HR 598	Rep. Panganiban	Investigation into the proliferation of online <i>sabong</i>	<p>The Committee requested PAGCOR to submit its position paper and pertinent data on local and off-shore e-games.</p> <p>The Committee will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 598 in its next meeting.</p> <p>ANAC-IC Party-List Rep. Jose Panganiban Jr., author of HR 598, explained that determining the legality of the fast-growing online <i>sabong</i> would “ensure that it will not be exploited as an object of commercialism nor made a tool of uncontrolled gambling.”</p> <p>Rep. Panganiban said that Section 5, paragraph (b) of PD 449 or the Cockfighting Law of 1974 provides that “only one cockpit shall be allowed in each city or municipality, except that in cities or municipalities with a population of over one hundred thousand, two cockpits may be established, maintained and operated.” However, he said, “<i>sabong</i>” had gone digital and the actual cockfighting is being shown nationwide via live stream.</p> <p>Alfonso Reyno Jr, chair and CEO of the Manila Jockey Club Inc. (MJCI), explained that the Manila Cockers Club, Inc. (MCCI), a subsidiary of MJCI, has a license to operate a cockpit, to broadcast the cockfights held therein, and to offer and accept bets electronically and through other means. MCCI’s license was granted by the Municipality of Carmona and ratified by the Provincial Board of Cavite. Reyno opined that receiving bets outside Carmona, Cavite which is done through the off-track betting (OTB) stations is allowed under RA 8792 or the Electronic Commerce Act of 2000.</p> <p>Discussing the revenues generated from cockfights, Reyno said that in 2016, MCCI remitted P21 million in taxes to the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), and P3.2 million as license fee to the Municipality of Carmona, Cavite.</p> <p>Atty. Omar Benitez of the Games and Amusements Board (GAB) said that GAB exercises regulatory powers over live-streaming of cockfights, adding that the area coverage is already beyond the territorial jurisdiction of a particular local government unit. He added that GAB’s function in this case is to ensure that the cockfight being shown via live-streaming is being held in duly authorized cockpits, that the applicant is authorized by law to take bets elsewhere, and that there is no game fixing and illegal betting involved.</p>
Good Government and Public Accountability jt. w/ Energy	HRs 565, 588 & 591	Reps. Herrera-Dy, Belmonte (J.C.), and Gatchalian	Inquiry into the circumstances that compelled Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) Director Francisco Jose Villa Jr. to commit suicide, including the alleged pressure from ERC Chair and Chief Executive Officer Jose Vicente Salazar to	The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel (2 nd District, Surigao del Sur), Chair of the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability, and Rep. Carlos Roman Uybarreta (Party-List, 1-CARE), Vice Chair of the Committee on

<p>Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability jt. w/ Energy</p>			<p>approve contracts without proper bidding and due adherence to procedure, as well as allegations of corruption behind ERC deals</p>	<p>Energy, will deliberate further on the issues raised relative to HRs 565, 588 and 591 in another meeting.</p> <p>In today's meeting, former ERC Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat Head Cherry Lynn Gonzales and BAC member Sharon Montañer testified before the Committee. Both served in the ERC's BAC from 2015 to 2016.</p> <p>They disclosed that the BAC, which was then headed by the late Atty. Francisco Jose Villa, went through several pressures or "management requests" from ERC Chair and CEO Jose Vicente Salazar to facilitate alleged management deals which to BAC members were highly irregular. These management requests include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conduct of a public bidding for the renovation of the ERC Board Room even after the project has already been completed; and • Procurement of a "highly technical consultant or HTC" to create the ERC's audio visual presentation (AVP). It was alleged that the approval of the contract with Luis Morelos for the production of the AVP was made through a rigged selection system. <p>Salazar consistently denied the allegations that he influenced the ERC procurement process nor has exerted any effort to pressure or force Villa to do any irregularity in the procurement process.</p> <p>Describing the circumstances surrounding Villa's death, Rosario Sofia Villa, the sister of the late ERC BAC Chair, manifested to the Joint Committee that except for the apparent deterioration of her brother's health as well as his pronouncements that he could no longer tolerate the pressures of his work, there was no indication that he was already so depressed as to commit suicide. She urged the Joint Committee to revisit RA 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act to prevent similar situations where government personnel are placed in perilous situations as what her brother had experienced.</p> <p>Steve Riva, head executive assistant (HEA) and chief-of-staff of Salazar, admitted that there was no bidding conducted for the renovation of the Board Room and that he later referred the matter to Villa months after the project was already finished.</p> <p>ABS Party-List Rep. Eugene Michael de Vera manifested that Riva's appointment in the ERC is contrary to law, adding that Riva and Salazar are first degree cousins. Salazar, however, averred that as ERC head, he is entitled to make such an appointment to</p>
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Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability jt. w/ Energy				<p>positions whose work is deemed confidential in nature.</p> <p>The Joint Committee will invite in its next meeting AVP contractor Luis Morelos and the officials of Prime Art Builders, Inc. to shed light on the issues raised in its next meeting. Prime Art was the contractor for the renovation of the ERC Board Room.</p>
	HR 566	Rep. Zarate	<p>Inquiry into the alleged midnight deals of the Manila Electric Company (MERALCO) - affiliated generation companies and the ERC which may be disadvantageous to the public and may cause power rate hikes</p>	<p>The Joint Committee will deliberate further on the issues raised relative to HR 566 in another next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Zarate, author of HR 566, said that in 2015, the Department of Energy (DOE) issued a circular requiring all distribution utilities (DUs) to undergo competitive selection process (CSP) in securing power supply arrangements (PSAs) to stop the charging of "self-negotiated" generation rates.</p> <p>However, Rep. Zarate alleged that ERC, through its Resolution No. 1, series of 2016, extended the deadline for the submission of applications by DUs to engage in CSP from November 6, 2015 to April 30, 2016 to accommodate the seven MERALCO-affiliated generation companies, which filed their applications four days before April 30, 2016. This, according to Rep. Zarate, is a clear manifestation of "midnight deals" undertaken by ERC to allow for negotiated PSAs to evade the competitive bidding policy. Rep. Zarate said that these midnight deals may result in rounds of electricity price hikes which are disadvantageous to the public.</p> <p>Salazar denied the allegations, saying that a total of 108 DUs participated in the CSP and 93 of them submitted their requirements after the first deadline, which was November 6, 2015.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on HR 566.</p>
Higher and Technical Education	HB 655	Rep. Oaminal	<p>Converting the Northwestern Mindanao State College of Science and Technology (NMSCST) in the City of Tanguib, Province of Misamis Occidental into a state university to be known as the University of Northwestern Mindanao (UNM), and appropriating funds therefor</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2nd District, Zamboanga Sibugay), approved in principle HB 655, subject to compliance with the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) requirements for the grant of a university status, and to the submission of a resolution of approval of the Board of Trustees of the NMSCST.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to exclude all the campuses proposed to be integrated in the NMSCST.</p>
	HB 1080	Rep. Lanete	<p>Integrating the Dr. Emilio B. Espinoza Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture and Technology campus learning site in the Municipality of Cawayan, Province of Masbate, as regular campus of the Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa Sr. Memorial State</p>	<p>The Committee approved HB 1080 subject to style and amendment and to the submission of resolution of approval from the Board of Trustees of the Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture and Technology.</p>

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education			College of Agriculture and Technology to be known as the Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture and Technology-Cawayan Campus	
	HB 4844	Rep. Abellanos	Including the Cebu City Extension Campus as a satellite campus of the Cebu Technological University (CTU), amending for the purpose RA 9744, or the law establishing the CTU	The Committee approved HB 4844 subject to style and amendment and to the submission of resolution of approval from the Board of Regents of CTU.
	HB 5048	Rep. Mercado	Mandating the integration of Maasin City College into the Southern Leyte State University System	The Committee approved HB 5048 subject to style and amendment and to the submission of resolution of approval from the Board of Regents of Southern Leyte State University.
	HB 4650	Rep. Gonzales (A.)	Renaming the Don Honorio Ventura Technological State University (DHVTSU) in the Municipality of Bacolor, Province of Pampanga as the Pampanga State University (PamSU), amending for the purpose RA 9832, or the law establishing the DHVTSU	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to fine-tune HB 4650.
	HB 4258	Rep. Rodriguez (M.)	Strengthening the Legal Education Board, thereby amending RA 7662, otherwise known as the Legal Education Reform Act of 1993 and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee will deliberate further on HB 4258 in its next meeting. The resource persons present were requested to submit to the Committee their position papers on the bill before May 8, 2017.
HR 706	Rep. Manalo	Inquiry into the rights and privileges of the 11 missing student-cadets undergoing mandatory shipboard training who were among the victims of the maritime accident involving M/V Starlite Atlantic	The Committee will continue its inquiry relative to HR 706 in its next meeting. ANGKLA Party-List Rep. Jesulito Manalo, author of HR 706, emphasized that in its next en banc meeting, CHED should give priority to the discussion of the fate of the 11 student-cadets who went missing when M/V Starlite Atlantic sank off the coast of Batangas last December 26, 2016 at the height of Typhoon Nina. Rep. Manalo urged CHED to require a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the student-cadet and the shipping company in order to clearly define the rights and privileges of the student while undergoing training and the responsibilities of the company concerned in case of injury, loss or death. The CHED was requested to submit to the Committee a copy of its investigation report on the matter.	
Public Information	HBs 1557, 1570 & 3134	Reps. Villafuerte, Vargas, and Revilla	Supporting the production of Philippine independent films by providing incentives to filmmakers who are given honors in notable international film competitions	The Committee, chaired by ACT TEACHERS Party-List Rep. Antonio Tinio, will deliberate further on the three bills. Rep. Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte Jr. (2 nd District, Camarines Sur), author of HB 1557, said that his bill seeks to provide incentives to all local filmmakers who have been awarded the best film prize or its equivalent including those that merited recognition for technical

Continuation... Public Information				<p>excellence in respected international film competitions or cinema festivals.</p> <p>Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) Chairperson Liza Diño expressed support for the bills. She suggested that the FDCP be designated as the implementing agency for the proposed law. She further requested an increase in the amount of the grant given to independent filmmakers considering the high cost of producing a film.</p> <p>National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) Commissioner Teddy Co suggested that all Filipino filmmakers should be granted incentives to encourage the production of quality films that may compete in international film competitions.</p> <p>Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City) suggested that the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) be tapped to provide an additional appropriation of P50 million for the implementation of the proposed law.</p> <p>Department of Finance (DOF) Chief Tax Specialist Miriam Tasarra objected to the bills, explaining that there are already existing tax incentives being granted to the local film industry.</p>
	HB 2404	Rep. Gomez	Creating the National Film Archive to be managed by the Film Development Council, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 2404.</p> <p>Rep. Lucy Gomez (4th District, Leyte), author of HB 2404, said that her bill seeks to establish a film archive to conserve and protect film negatives and/or prints, which are part of the nation's historical, cultural, and artistic heritage.</p> <p>Diño said that the FDCP already has 35,000 films in its care which are being preserved in four film vaults. She shared that the Council is looking for a permanent facility that will serve as film archive because the present facility is not spacious enough to house the volume of films that need to be preserved. She also said that the FDCP does not have enough budget to digitize and restore the original films as part of the preservation process.</p> <p>Star Cinema Production's New Media Head Joaquin Enrico Santos said his company also has a film preservation facility, with some 5,000 films already restored and digitized.</p> <p>The Committee will conduct an ocular inspection of the film preservation facilities of the FDCP and the ABS-CBN.</p>
Suffrage and Electoral Reforms	HR 667	Rep. Bravo (A.)	Inquiry into the alleged claim of the Smartmatic-Total Information Management (Smartmatic-TIM) that it has the right to enforce the "considered-sold" provision of	The Committee, chaired by CIBAC Party-List Rep. Sherwin Tugna, will deliberate further on the issues raised relative to HR 667 in its next meeting.

<p>Continuation... Suffrage and Electoral Reforms</p>			<p>its two lease contracts with option to purchase entered into with the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) for the conduct of the May 9, 2016 national and local elections</p>	<p>COOP NATCCO Party-List Rep. Anthony Bravo Ph.D., author of HR 667, expressed concern about possible legal implications of COMELEC's two lease contracts with Smartmatic that contain a "considered sold" provision in the event that the vote counting machines leased to the poll body are not returned as agreed upon. The enforcement of this provision, Rep. Bravo said, would mean COMELEC's payment to Smartmatic of P2.08 billion for the unreturned 97,366 optical mark reader (OMR) machines.</p> <p>Aside from the OMR machines, COMELEC has 83,040 precinct count optical scanner (PCOS) machines that were previously purchased by COMELEC from Smartmatic-TIM in two elections prior to last year's May elections.</p> <p>COMELEC Executive Director Jose Tolentino said that the OMRs and PCOS machines are currently stored in their warehouse in Laguna.</p> <p>Smartmatic legal counsel Victor Lazatin reported to the Committee that the OMRs were not yet returned by COMELEC, contrary to the latter's announcement that it has already turned over 97,215 OMRs to Smartmatic, retaining just 151 units.</p> <p>In response, Tolentino said that the cause of the delay in returning the OMRs was due to a machine stripping procedure that the COMELEC must comply with pursuant to a resolution passed by the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET). After which, he said, Smartmatic would then be allowed to retrieve those units from COMELEC's warehouse.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Fredenil "Fred" Castro (2nd District, Capiz) asked if the OMRs used in the 2016 elections could still be used in the 2019 elections.</p> <p>Tolentino replied that it depends on the recommendation by the COMELEC Advisory Council (CAC) on whether to refurbish the old machines or purchase or lease new ones.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Sharon Garin (Party-list, AAMBIS-OWA) inquired on the rationale behind the "considered sold" provision of the lease contracts between COMELEC and Smartmatic.</p> <p>Tolentino explained that the said provision was in line with a Supreme Court decision on Binay vs. Roxas, which required that the OMRs or vote counting machines should be put under precautionary protection order (PPO) to safeguard the election results.</p> <p>The COMELEC was requested to submit to the Committee a copy of all its contracts with Smartmatic, as well as the result of its diagnostic test on the viability of the PCOS machines for future use.</p>
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Welfare of Children	Substitute Bill to HBs 440, 748, 848, 953, 982, 1345, 1971, 2550, 3407, 3428, 3530, 3826, 3968, 4552 & 4738	Deputy Speaker Quimbo, Reps. Aglipay-Villar, Villarica, Ocampo, Fortun, Acop, Suansing (E.), Romualdez, Aragonés, Cortuna, Unabia, Revilla, Herrera-Dy, Rodríguez (M.), and Brosas	Instituting the Magna Carta of Day Care Workers, providing funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Divina Grace Yu (1 st District, Zamboanga del Sur), approved the Committee Report on the substitute bill.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 13, 1280, 2345, 3050 & 4676	Reps. Belmonte (F.), Belmonte (J.C.), Dalipe, Tambunting, and Nieto	Providing for the special protection of children in situations of armed conflict and providing penalties for violations thereof	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) informed the Committee that in its consultations with stakeholders from the South (Mindanao Region), some organizations have expressed apprehension about the passage of the proposed law. In this light, DSWD Undersecretary for Institutional Development Mae Fe Ancheta-Templa explained that the Department is withdrawing its earlier support for the bill until a more exhaustive deliberation on the matter is completed.</p> <p>Rep. Manuel Jose "Mannix" Dalipe (2nd District, Zamboanga City), author of HB 2345, requested Templa to submit to the Committee the letters or position papers the DSWD received from these organizations.</p> <p>National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) Planning Officer Dayang-dayang Jehan Kiram expressed support for the Committee's continued deliberations on the measures, adding that it will not in any way affect the peace talks and the present situation in Muslim Mindanao.</p> <p>United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Country Representative to the Philippines Lotta Sylwander and the representative of the Department of Education (DepEd) expressed support for the bill.</p> <p>The Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) promised to submit to the Committee a copy of the existing protocol in handling children in situations of armed conflict.</p> <p>The Committee Members and resource persons were requested to submit their proposed amendments to the substitute bill before the next scheduled meeting.</p>

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Food Security (Special Committee) (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 2818, 4354, 4337 & 4422	Reps. Suansing (E.), Romero, Salon, and Abayon	Promoting integrated urban agricultural development in all metropolitan areas nationwide establishing to address food security concerns, ecological community functions, and providing incentives therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), will deliberate further on the draft Substitute Bill to HBs 2818, 4354, 4337 and 4422 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Atty. Joselito Conejero, from the Office of Quezon City (QC) Vice Mayor Ma. Josefina “Joy” Belmonte-Alimurun, presented the “Joy of Urban Farming” program of QC.</p> <p>Conejero said that the program, which was launched on September 27, 2010 in line with QC’s commitment to attain the millennium development goals (MDGs), aims to address hunger and malnutrition, provide alternative sources of livelihood, cultivate appreciation for home and community-based food production, and promote the consumption of vegetables.</p> <p>Conejero added that the city government intends to enact an ordinance that will institutionalize urban farming.</p> <p>Leonard Guevarra, Agricultural Commodity Division chief, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), suggested that existing units within the Department of Agriculture (DA) should be given the task of coordinating all the activities related to urban agriculture instead of creating a new office for the purpose.</p> <p>Under the bill, the DA shall establish within the Department an Office of Urban Agriculture that will coordinate all the activities related to urban agriculture and perform oversight function related thereto.</p> <p>However, both Reps. Suansing and Orestes Salon (Party-List, AGRI), author of HB 4337, underscored the importance of creating a separate office in order to institutionalize all efforts related to urban farming.</p> <p>Rep. Salon likewise emphasized the critical role of local government units (LGUs) in identifying idle lands that can be devoted to urban farming.</p> <p>Representing the League of Cities of the Philippines, Senior Policy Officer Godofredo Julius Cualteros proposed the inclusion of a provision in the bill that will encourage LGUs to include in their local climate change plans the concept of urban agriculture.</p> <p>The Committee requested Cualteros to draft this proposed provision for the consideration of the TWG.</p>

Government Reorganization jt. w/ Housing and Urban Development (Technical Working Group)	HBs 449, 1518, 3639 & 5114	Rep. Belmonte (J.C.), Deputy Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo, Reps. Romero, and Bagatsing	Creating the Department of Housing, Planning and Urban Development, defining its mandates, powers and functions, providing funds therefor	<p>The joint technical working group (TWG), co-chaired by KABAYAN Party-List Rep. Ron Salo for the Committee on Government Reorganization, and Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6th District, Quezon City) for the Committee on Housing and Urban Development, will deliberate further on the proposed law in its next meeting.</p> <p>The TWG uses the “working draft” prepared by the Committee Secretariat in reviewing the proposed law, which incorporates the relevant provisions of HBs 449, 1518, 3639, 5114, 1721, and 3375, as well as a similar bill (HB 6194) approved on third reading during the 16th Congress.</p> <p>Among the agreements reached during the meeting were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the definition of the term “housing” in Section 3 (Definition of Terms); • Define the term “human settlements;” and • Simplify or shorten the powers and functions of the proposed Department of Housing and Urban Development (Section 5). <p>Rep. Salo expressed his concern about the language of one of the policies stated in Section 2 (Declaration of Policies) of the working draft, which reads as: “In the implementation of the program, the State shall respect the rights of small property owners.” He explained that it might mean that the rights of big property owners will not be respected.</p> <p>Chamber of Real Estate and Builders’ Associations, Inc. (CREBA) National President Charlie Gorayeb echoed Rep. Salo’s concern, saying that excluding big property owners is a form of discrimination.</p> <p>However, Rep. Belmonte, author of HB 449, explained that the intention of that policy is to protect small property owners and give them some leeway when government expropriates properties for housing and urban and rural development purposes.</p> <p>Rep. Salo said Section 2 needs to be reworded to address the issue raised.</p> <p>CREBA was requested to submit its position paper on the proposed law.</p>
	HB 1721	Rep. Biazon	Defining the vision and policies of government in the housing and urban development sector, creating the Department of Housing and Urban Development, defining its mandate, powers and functions	
Health (Technical Working Group)	HBs 53, 253, 538, 581, 663, 1106, 1804, 1973, 2023, 2511, 2674, 3146, 3161, 3536, 3978, 4276 & 5145	Reps. Bag-ao, Roque (H.), Yap (V.), Deputy Speaker Cayetano, Reps. Baguilat, Eriguel, Suansing (E.), Marcos, Angara-	Strengthening the Philippine comprehensive policy on human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) prevention, treatment, care and support, and establishing the Philippine National HIV and AIDS Program, revising for the purpose RA 8504, otherwise known as the Philippine AIDS Prevention and	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Rep. Jose Enrique “Joet” Garcia III (2nd District, Bataan), agreed to draft a Substitute Bill to the 17 measures incorporating therein the pertinent recommendations of the resource persons.</p> <p>Rep. Garcia said that the sheer number of measures filed on the subject matter is</p>

Continuation... Health (Technical Working Group)		Castillo, Tan (A.), Alejano, Tambunting, Deputy Speaker Garin, Reps. Villarin, Salo, and Mendoza	Control Act of 1998, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>indicative of the importance and necessity of formulating a comprehensive and responsive policy to arrest, if not totally eradicate, the continuing surge in the number of HIV cases in the country. It is time for the national government to intensify its efforts to increase HIV awareness, he stressed.</p> <p>Director Lyndon Lee Suy of the Disease and Control Bureau of the Department of Health (DOH) said that the Department favors the proposal requiring two-thirds of the membership of the proposed Philippine National AIDS Council (PNAC) to come from national government agencies (NGAs) and one-third from civil society organizations (CSOs).</p> <p>On the other hand, Amara Quesada-Bondad, executive director of Action for Health Initiatives, Inc. (ACHIEVE), pushed for a greater participation of CSOs in the proposed Council to ensure that the voices of those most affected by the HIV epidemic are heard.</p> <p>Rep. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" Mariño (5th District, Batangas) suggested that the bill should include a provision identifying the agency that is in the best position to implement the government's HIV/AIDS awareness programs.</p> <p>Marites Paneda, information officer at the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), said that PIA has the capability to inform the grassroots on matters regarding HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Commissioner Percival Cendaña of the National Youth Commission (NYC) and Social Worker Catherine Espedido of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) suggested that a child who is between 15 and 17 years of age should be allowed to voluntarily submit himself or herself to HIV testing even without parental consent. Espedido added that proper HIV counseling before and after the testing should be extended to the child by a licensed social worker or health service provider.</p>
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PUBLIC HEARINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Natural Resources	HR 72	Rep. Fortun	Inquiry into the impact of mining in the country, its effects to the environment, agriculture, public health, rights of indigenous peoples (IPs), and its contribution to revenues of local government units (LGUs) and the national government, and to introduce reform measures that will effectively address the weaknesses, shortcomings, and failures of	<p>The Committee, chaired by Bayan Muna Party-List Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate, held a public hearing in Baguio City on March 9, 2017 in relation to HR 72.</p> <p>The hearing aims to get the sentiments of the people on the ground who are adversely affected by mining operations, in this case, the mining operations of Lepanto Consolidated</p>

Continuation... Natural Resources			the Mining Act of 1995 (RA 7942) and other mining-related laws, rules, regulations and issuances	<p>Mining Company.</p> <p>Aside from Rep. Zarate, other House Members who attended the public hearing were Reps. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte), France Castro (Party-List, ACT TEACHERS), Allen Jesse Mangaoang (Kalinga), Ariel "Ka Ayik Casilao (Party-List, ANAKPAWIS), Mark Go (Baguio City), and Ronald Cosalan (Benguet).</p> <p>Also present in the hearing were representatives from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Mines and Geosciences Bureau (DENR-MGB), Department of Health (DOH), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), non-government organizations (NGOs), local government of the Provinces of Ilocos Sur and Benguet, and mining firms, Philex Mining Corporation (PX) and Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company.</p> <p>The next day, March 10, 2017, the Committee conducted an ocular inspection of affected communities in Mankayan, Benguet and inside the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company.</p>
Rural Development	Substitute Bill to HBs 2258 & 3953	Reps. Enverga and Kho	Institutionalizing the convergence strategy for sustainable rural development, providing the implementing mechanisms therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Deogracias Ramos Jr. (2nd District, Sorsogon), held a public hearing on the proposed National Convergence Initiative Act in Piddig, Ilocos Norte on March 10, 2017.</p> <p>The Committee also conducted an ocular inspection of successful convergence projects in Piddig, such as the water-impounding dams, rice mills, organic farms, and the dragon fruit farm.</p> <p>Rep. Elisa "Olga" Kho (2nd District, Masbate), author of HB 3953, explained that the national convergence initiative (NCI) is the complementation of efforts and resources of the Departments of Agriculture (DA), Agrarian Reform (DAR), Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the local government units (LGUs) to promote sustainable rural development.</p> <p>Rep. Kho stressed that despite the previously adopted rural development strategy in various Philippine Development Plans, achievements of the NCI are still limited and institutional weaknesses still exist. By doing away with fragmented service deliveries, the use of resources can be maximized, she added.</p> <p>Aside from Reps. Ramos and Kho, the other House Members who attended the public hearing were Party-List Reps. Rodante Marcoleta (SAGIP) and Orestes Salon (AGRI).</p> <p>The Committee will hold its next public hearing in Zamboanga.</p>

AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Visayas Development (Special Committee)	Briefing by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Alejandro Mirasol (5th District, Negros Occidental), listened to the presentation of DPWH Development Planning Division Chief Nenita Jimenez on the Department's plans and programs and budget priorities for FY 2018.</p> <p>At the outset, Jimenez said that the plans and programs of the DPWH are anchored on the Duterte Administration's 10-point Socio-Economic Agenda. She added that the present administration is seriously looking at improving the quality of roads in the country taking into consideration the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Reports from 2010-2016 which show the Philippines being outranked by its neighboring countries like Thailand and Indonesia.</p> <p>For 2018, Jimenez reported that the DPWH will give priority funding to the following programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Preservation Program - asphalt overlay, concrete reblocking; rehabilitation/reconstruction/upgrading of national roads and drainage system; • Network Development Program - road widening; construction of by-pass/diversion roads and flyovers/interchanges/underpasses; and paving of roads; and • Bridge Program - reconstruction of old and weak bridges; structural retrofitting/rehabilitation/widening of permanent bridges; and construction of new bridges. <p>Due to lack of material time, Rep. Mirasol requested the officials from the DPWH and the Department of Agriculture (DA) to do away with their audio-visual presentations and just submit to the Committee a copy of their presentation. Nevertheless, DPWH and DA representatives were at hand to answer the queries of the Committee Members.</p> <p>On the query of Biliran Rep. Rogelio Espina, DA Regional Executive Director Remelyn Recoter said that farm-to-market road (FMR) projects are determined and given priority based on factors, such as the size of the agricultural area, poverty incidence in the area, the number of farmers available, and road density.</p> <p>Other House Members questioned the delay in the implementation of DA and the DPWH's projects in their respective districts.</p> <p>The Committee will send a formal communication to the DPWH Secretary to urge the Department to expedite the release of the Notice to Proceed for FMR projects that are still pending with the DPWH. Likewise, a letter will be sent to the DPWH to request an inventory of FMR projects and their corresponding status.</p> <p>The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) will be invited again in the Committee's next meeting with a stern warning that appropriate actions will be taken if it again fails to honor the Committee's invitation.</p>
Metro Manila Development	Discussion on the rationalization of the proposed transport terminals in Metro Manila to mitigate worsening traffic situation	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), discussed with concerned government agencies and private groups the rationalization of the proposed transport terminals in Metro Manila.</p> <p>Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Center Executive Director Ferdinand Pecson said that the integrated transport system (ITS) project, which</p>

<p>Continuation... Metro Manila Development</p>	<p>is a PPP project, will not only involve the construction of a passenger terminal building, but will be a multi-modal terminal (with arrival and departure bays, ticketing and baggage handling facilities, and park-ride facilities).</p> <p>Provincial Bus Operators Association of the Philippines (PBOAP) Executive Director Alejandro Yague Jr. and Southern Luzon Bus Operators Association (SOLUBOA) Executive Director Michael Salalima expressed their opposition to the ITS projects, saying that they were never consulted about the project's overall plan, the location, and fees to be imposed.</p> <p>Salalima raised three major concerns that are expected to confront bus operators and commuters upon the establishment of the South ITS project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The location of the South ITS project in Taguig is not feasible as it will all the more worsen the traffic situation considering that the area is already heavily congested at present; • The elevation of the access ramp is deemed so high and thus accident-prone; • The project is configured in such a way that buses will have to take the skyway elevated system to access the terminal, thus bus operators will be bound to pay the toll fee. <p>AKO BICOL Party-List Rep. Rodel Batocabe inquired why the Food Terminal Inc. (FTI) in Taguig City has been chosen as the location of the South ITS project when the compound serves as terminal for farm products coming from the provinces.</p> <p>DOTr Assistant Secretary Mark Richmond de Leon said that the location of the South ITS project within the FTI compound is based on a study by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). De Leon said that the project is designed to connect the C5-Skyway that will be implemented by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).</p> <p>Rep. Castelo added that converting the FTI compound into a provincial bus terminal will deprive farmers and other food producers a trading place which will translate into additional costs on their part and higher prices for agricultural and food products, to the detriment of the consumers.</p> <p>ANGKLA Party-List Rep. Jesulito Manalo believes that the project's concession agreement is grossly disadvantageous to the government. He urged concerned government agencies to review carefully the concession agreements for all the ITS projects and to listen to the sentiments of bus companies and operators.</p> <p>Several Members of the Committee agreed that the welfare and convenience of the commuting public should be given utmost priority. They requested to hold in abeyance the South and Southwest ITS projects until such time that the Committee has reviewed all the documents relative to the said projects.</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit the pertinent documents required by the Members of the Committee.</p>
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