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BUDGET BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Appropriations	<p>Briefing on the proposed FY 2018 budget, and plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the following government agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health (DOH) 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (1st District, Davao City), listened to the presentations on the proposed FY 2018 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of National Defense (DND).</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair Rep. Scott Davies Lanete, M.D. (3rd District, Masbate) sat as the presiding officer during the budget briefing of the DOH.</p> <p>DOH Secretary Paulyn Jean Rosell-Ubial said that under the 2018 National Expenditure Program (NEP), the DOH and its attached agencies/corporations are set to receive P164.86 billion for next year, which is 9% higher than its current budget of P151.33 billion. The breakdown of DOH's budget is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Secretary (OSEC) – P103.6 billion; Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth) – P57.13 billion; Philippine Heart Center (PHC) – P870 million; Philippine Children's Medical Center (PCMC) – P850 million; National Kidney Transplant Institute (NKTi)– P780 million; National Nutrition Council (NNC) – P630 million; Commission on Population (POPCOM) – P490 million; Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP) – P390 million; and Philippine Institute for Traditional and Alternative Health Care (PITAHC) – P120 million. <p>Rosell-Ubial also reported on DOH's accomplishments from 2015 to 2017 in pursuit of the three "guarantees" under the Philippine Health Agenda Framework, namely: care for all life stages and protection from triple burden of diseases; service delivery network; and universal health insurance.</p> <p>The DOH's 2018 programs will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National immunization of infants, adolescents, pregnant women, and senior citizens; Services on family health, nutrition and responsible parenting; Prevention and control of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases as well as non-communicable diseases; Treatment and management of drug abuse cases in 13 DOH-treatment and rehabilitation centers; Continued deployment of a pool of human resource for health; and Improvement of primary health facilities. <p>The DOH and its attached agencies are requested to submit the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stock inventory of each of the categories of contraceptives and their corresponding amount;

<p>Continuation... Appropriations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of National Defense (DND) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of areas where barangay health stations will be constructed; • Details on the unobligated allotment of P12 billion for FY 2016 which is currently part of the continuing appropriation of the Department; • List of DOH-operating units with corresponding utilization rates; and • Breakdown of DOH scholarship grants for FY 2015, 2016 and 2017. <p>Committee Vice Chair and Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon sat as the presiding officer during the DND's budget briefing.</p> <p>DND Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the DBM-recommended FY 2018 budget for DND and its attached agencies amounting to P195.48 billion is 8% higher than this year's P181.36 billion budget.</p> <p>Of the 2018 budget, P443 million is allocated to the DND Proper while P76.22 billion is for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) General Headquarters (GHQ). The rest of the budget will go to the following attached agencies of the DND:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philippine Army (PA) - P63.78 billion; • Philippine Air Force (PAF) – P19.69 billion; • Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) - P12.77 billion; • Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) - P1.60 billion; • Government Arsenal (GA) - P1.23 billion; • Office of Civil Defense (OCD) - P567.20 million; • National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP) - P80.08 million; and • Philippine Navy (PN) - P21.21 million. <p>Rep. Nograles inquired whether the medical equipment procured last 2016 for the AFP Medical Center in V. Luna, Quezon City were already delivered.</p> <p>Lorenzana explained that although there were delays in the procurement process, the medical equipment are already for delivery to the AFP Medical Center by next month.</p> <p>Replying to another query of Rep. Nograles, Lorenzana said that China's military assistance to the Philippines amounts to US\$14 million. The first delivery, consisting of 800,000 units of M14 rifles, and 5 million rounds of ammunitions, was done in Clark, Pampanga last month. Lorenzana added that the second delivery, which will include rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and fast boats, is due in September.</p> <p>The Members of the Committee later took turns in asking the DND officials about issues and concerns regarding the country's internal and external security.</p> <p>Sec. Lorenzana and AFP Chief of Staff Eduardo Año gave the following answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AFP Modernization Program allocates P200 billion a year to modernize all the branches of the AFP towards maintaining a self-reliant military capable of neutralizing external threats. • The AFP's efforts are currently focused on the country's internal security given the threats coming from armed groups such as the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army/National Democratic Front (CPP/NPA/NDF), Abu Sayyaf, and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). On threats to external security especially with the country's territorial dispute with China involving the West Philippine Sea, the President is looking for an amicable solution to resolve this dispute. • With regard to the armed conflict in Marawi City perpetrated
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Basic Education and Culture	HBs 4514 & 5441	Rep. Amatong	Separating and converting the Kalawit National High School – Piannon Annex and the Liloy National High School – Patawag Extension, both in the Province of Zamboanga del Norte, into independent national high schools and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, presided by KABAYAN Party-List Rep. Ron Salo, approved HBs 4514 and 5441.</p> <p>The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Reports.</p>
	HBs 5141, 5142, 5143 & 5144	Rep. Bautista-Bandigan	Separating and converting national high school annexes into independent national high schools in certain municipalities in the Province of Davao Occidental and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HBs 5141, 5142, 5143 and 5144 and the corresponding Committee Reports.
	HBs 5731 & 5802	Reps. Vargas and Duavit	Synchronizing the opening of all classes in all schools in the Philippines	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on HBs 5731 and 5802.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Michael John "Jack" Duavit (1st District, Rizal), author of HB 5802.</p> <p>Rep. Duavit explained that synchronizing the opening of classes in all schools in the country, with the school year starting on the second Monday of August but not later than the second Monday of September, will save students and faculty from the harsh effects of the rainy season, which begins in June. It will also facilitate partnerships with foreign schools in student exchange programs and researches.</p> <p>Rep. Lianda Bolilia (4th District, Batangas) sponsored HB 5731 on behalf of its author, Rep. Alfredo Vargas III (4th District, Quezon City).</p> <p>Several House Members, expressing concern</p>

<p>Continuation... Basic Education and Culture</p>				<p>about moving the start of the school year to August thus holding classes during the summer months, said that school buildings are not designed and built to reduce summer heat which may be unbearable for students.</p> <p>In the same vein, Rep. Juliet Marie De Leon Ferrer (4th District, Negros Occidental) said that synchronizing the opening of classes on account of weather conditions may not be enough reason especially since weather conditions vary across the country.</p> <p>Rep. Ma. Lourdes Aggabao (4th District, Isabela) recalled the time when the opening of classes was in the month of August but just after one academic year, it was moved back to June. She suggested that the Department of Education (DepEd) be asked to inform the Committee of the reason for such a swift policy change, which could be helpful in the deliberation of the proposed law.</p> <p>The Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations (COCOPEA) and the National Youth Commission (NYC) interposed no objection to the proposed measures.</p> <p>DepEd Assistant Secretary Nepomuceno Malaluan promised to submit the Department's official position paper on the bills.</p> <p>For its part, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) said that it does not recommend a mandatory change in the academic calendar of schools in the country. The National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) concurred with the position of CHED. (The NUSP is a nationwide alliance of student councils, governments and unions that is committed to the advancement of the student's rights and welfare.)</p> <p>All the resource persons present were requested to submit their position papers for the consideration of the TWG.</p>
	<p>HB 5097</p>	<p>Rep. Tupas</p>	<p>Providing for the restoration of mandatory military training for all Grade 11 and 12 students by reinstating Sections 38 and 39 of RA 7077, otherwise known as the Armed Forces of the Philippines Reservist Act</p>	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HBs 5097 and 5113 in another meeting.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Raneo Abu (2nd District, Batangas), author of HB 5113, underscored the importance of restoring the ROTC in both public and private educational institutions as this will inculcate in the Filipino youth the values of patriotism and nationalism and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs.</p>
	<p>HB 5113</p>	<p>Deputy Speaker Abu</p>	<p>Amending RA 7077, mandating the institutionalization, development, training, organization, and administration of basic reserve officers training corps (ROTC) in Grades 11 and 12 in public and private educational institutions</p>	<p>Rep. Bolilia also sponsored HB 5097 on behalf of its author, Rep. Raul "Boboy" Tupas (5th District, Iloilo).</p> <p>The NYC, Department of National Defense (DND), and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) expressed support for the bills.</p>

Continuation... Basic Education and Culture				On the other hand, the NUSP pushed for the abolition of the ROTC.
Energy	Substitute Bill to HBs 182, 812, 970, 1220, 1527, 2388, 2540 & 3040	Reps. Olivarez, Batocabe, Romualdez, Umali, Macapagal-Arroyo, Abad, Tambunting, and Roque (H.)	Institutionalizing energy efficiency and conservation, enhancing the efficient use of energy, granting incentives to energy efficiency and conservation projects	<p>The Committee, chaired by Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Jay Velasco, approved the substitute bill subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Reynaldo Umali (2nd District, Oriental Mindoro) presented the salient features of the substitute bill drafted by the technical working group (TWG) which was created for the purpose and which he chaired.</p>
	HR 860	Deputy Speaker Garin	Inquiry into the performance and impact assessment of RA 9367 or the Biofuels Act of 2006, as amended, and the development of alternative sources of biofuels	<p>The Committee terminated its inquiry on HR 860.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), author of HR 860, stressed that the purpose of the inquiry is to assess the current state of the country's biofuel program and recommend remedial legislation, if needed, to propel the promotion of alternative sources of energy to reduce the country's dependence on imported fuel.</p> <p>Dr. Shirley Agrupis, professor at the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) and program leader of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for Development (STRIDE) Program, gave a briefing on the potential of "nipa" as a new feedstock for bioethanol production.</p> <p>Agrupis said that the research project is aimed at reducing dependence on fossil fuels, improving the quality of the environment, and creating opportunities for countryside socio-economic development. The bioethanol research facility is being implemented jointly by the local government unit of Cagayan and the MMSU.</p> <p>Explaining the benefits of using nipa as a source of alternative fuel, Agrupis said nipa produces high amount of sap that can be converted to alcohol. She reported that there are almost 6,000 hectares of nipa plantations all over the country which are sufficient to supply the stock requirement for biofuel production in the country.</p> <p>The Department of Energy (DOE) was requested to submit a report on its research on "jatropa" as a biofuel feedstock.</p> <p>Likewise, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) was requested to submit a report on the status of implementation of the Social Amelioration and Welfare Program (SAWP) instituted under RA 9367.</p> <p>SAWP is a social amelioration scheme that aims to improve the socio-economic well-being of workers in the biofuel industry including their</p>

Continuation... Energy				families through augmentation of income and access to productive resources, social protection coverage, and provision of livelihood and employment opportunities.
Suffrage and Electoral Reforms	Substitute Bill to HBs 5359, 5361, 5380, 5510 & 5653 and HR 905	Reps. Barbers, Velasco, Panganiban, Sy-Alvarado, Pimentel, and Castelo	Postponing the October 23, 2017 synchronized <i>Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan</i> elections, amending for the purpose RA 9164, as amended by RA 9340, RA 10656, and RA 10923	<p>The Committee, chaired by CIBAC Party-List Rep. Sherwin Tugna, approved the substitute bill and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Under the bill, the synchronized <i>Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan</i> elections will be moved to the second Monday of May 2018. Subsequent elections shall be on the second Monday of 2020.</p> <p>Incumbent barangay officials shall remain in office, unless sooner removed or suspended for cause, until their successors shall have been duly elected and qualified.</p> <p>Atty. Edmund Abesamis, national president of the <i>Liga ng mga Barangay</i>, said that the regional officers of the league support the postponement of the barangay elections, adding that it will facilitate compliance with President Rodrigo Duterte's call to cleanse the barangays of drug users, peddlers, and coddlers.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Deputy Speaker Fredenil "Fred" Castro (2nd District, Capiz), Philippine National Police (PNP) Director General for Operations Emmanuel Licup disclosed that out of the 42,036 barangays in the country, more than 20,000 are drug-affected.</p> <p>Also upon questioning by Deputy Speaker Castro, Atty. Czareanah Aquino, OIC-Legal and Prosecution Service of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), said that the Agency has apprehended 226 <i>barangay kagawads</i> and 87 <i>barangay</i> chairpersons for drug-related offenses from 2011 to July 31, 2017.</p>
Trade and Industry	HB 3252	Rep. Biron	Establishing the Drug Price Regulatory Board to regulate the prices of drugs and medicines in the Philippines, amending for the purpose RA 9502, otherwise known as the Universally Accessible Cheaper and Quality Medicines Act of 2008	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ferjanel Biron, M.D. (4th District, Iloilo), will deliberate further on HB 3252 in another meeting.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija) presided over the meeting to allow the Committee Chair to sponsor his bill.</p> <p>Rep. Biron said that the proposed Drug Price Regulatory Board, which shall be attached to the Department of Health (DOH), shall regulate the prices of drugs and medicines in the country to ensure access to quality but cheaper medicines for all.</p> <p>When asked to comment on the bill, DOH Assistant Secretary Enrique Tayag said that the DOH supports the creation of the Board, citing institutional limitations in monitoring and</p>

<p>Continuation... Trade and Industry</p>				<p>implementing laws aimed at lowering the prices of medicines from the time RA 6675 or the Generics Act of 1988 was enacted up to the present.</p> <p>Federation of Senior Citizens Association of the Philippines (FSCAP) Regional President George Banal appealed to the Committee not to exempt drugs and medicines under price regulation from the coverage of RA 9994 or the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010.</p> <p>One of the provisions of HB 3252 states that “drugs and medicines under price regulation as fixed by the Board will not be included in the grant of twenty percent (20%) discount and exemption from the value-added tax (VAT) to senior citizens” which are otherwise granted to them under RA 9994.</p> <p>Rep. Biron, however, assured FSCAP that once his bill is enacted into law, the cost of the regulated drugs will be much cheaper than the prevailing prices of medicines with senior citizen discounts.</p> <p>On the effect of the proposed law on the viability of the pharmaceutical companies, Rep. Biron said that it will level the playing field for all stakeholders and ensure fair pricing of drugs and medicines.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) Executive Director Teodoro Padilla expressed concern that with price regulation, the industry might not be able to recover the research and development costs related to the manufacture of drugs. Rep. Biron explained that most of the products that will be under price regulation are non-patented drugs, adding that patented drugs will not be subject to price regulation being covered by the law on intellectual property rights.</p> <p>Resource persons from the government: DOH, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI); and those from the private sector, namely: PHAP, FSCAP, <i>Drugstores Association of the Philippines (DSAP)</i>, <i>Mercury Drugstore</i>, UNILAB, Philippine Chamber of Pharmaceutical Industry (PCPI), Philippine Pharmacists Association, Inc., Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC), World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office, <i>Philippine Alliance of Patient Organizations (PAPO)</i>, and <i>Laban ng Konsyumer Inc.</i>, were requested to submit their position papers before August 24, 2017.</p>
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