

# Committee Daily Bulletin



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

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. II No. 60  
December 6, 2017

## BICAMERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Bicameral Conference Committee	HB 5636 & SB 1592	Rep. Cua and Senator Angara	Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion Act (TRAIN)	<p>The Bicameral Conference Committee, co-chaired by Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua and Senator Sonny Angara, respective Chairpersons of the Committee on Ways and Means of both Houses, will deliberate further on the disagreeing provisions of HB 5636 and SB 1592 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Other conferees who were present during the bicameral conference committee meeting were the following: On the part of the House, Minority Leader Danilo Suarez (3rd District, Quezon), Deputy Speakers Romero "Miro" Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City) and Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), and Reps. Gus Tambunting (2nd District, Parañaque City), Aurelio "Dong" Gonzales Jr. (3rd District, Pampanga), and Xavier Jesus Romualdo (Camiguin); On the part of the Senate, Senate President Pro-Tempore Ralph Recto, and Senators Loren Legarda and Juan Miguel "Migz" Zubiri.</p>

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agrarian Reform	Substitute Bill to HBs 5501 & 1396	Speaker Alvarez and Rep. Amante	Providing for the inclusion of converting or causing the conversion of irrigated and irrigable lands as a prohibited act and its corresponding penalty amending for the purpose RA 6657, as amended, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rene Relampagos (1st District, Bohol), approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 5501 and 1396 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Department of Agriculture (DA), Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB), and Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) expressed their support for the passage of the bill.</p>
Games and Amusements	HB 5187	Rep. Alejano	The Internet Gambling Regulatory Act of 2017	<p>The Committee, presided by its Vice Chair Rep. Randolph Ting (3rd District, Cagayan), will deliberate further on HB 5187.</p> <p>Rep. Gary Alejano (Party-List, MAGDALO), author of HB 5187, said that online gambling has become one of the most lucrative businesses at</p>

Continuation... Games and Amusements				<p>present. Because of the proliferation of online gambling in the Philippines, Rep. Alejano underscored the need to regulate it by creating a regulatory board which shall promulgate the rules and regulations governing Internet gaming.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Alejano on how the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) monitors the tax remittance of online gambling operators, PAGCOR Senior Manager for Off-shore Gaming Victor Padilla Jr. said that PAGCOR relies on data submitted by the operators themselves. Padilla admitted that there is a huge chance that these data are not completely correct and that the operators are probably being undertaxed.</p> <p>Nevertheless, Padilla assured the Committee that PAGCOR has already taken steps, such as the use of a third party auditing platform, to address the situation. He asked the Committee for some leeway since PAGCOR is still quite new to the regulation of online gambling and is still in the process of making adjustments.</p> <p>Rep. Peter "Sr. Pedro" Unabia (1st District, Misamis Oriental) suggested that PAGCOR cease further issuance of licenses to online gambling operators until such time that PAGCOR has fully adopted a system that will effectively regulate online gambling.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City), Padilla admitted that PAGCOR has no idea on the extent of illegal online gambling in the Philippines. Padilla also explained that PAGCOR does not have the police power to conduct raids or arrests against illegal online gambling operators. However, it coordinates with the Philippine National Police (PNP) to make such arrests.</p> <p>PNP Police Chief Superintendent Alfredo Valdez informed the Committee that there have been very few raids conducted against illegal online gambling. But in those raids, 26 foreign nationals were arrested and four of these were already deported, while the others still have pending court cases.</p> <p>Rep. Ting advised PAGCOR to work in close coordination with the PNP in order to combat illegal online gambling. He added that PAGCOR should consider employing people from the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (CEZA) who had previous experiences in the regulation of illegal gambling activities.</p> <p>PAGCOR was instructed to submit a list of licensed online gambling operators, including their owners and board members, as well as a list of those still applying for a license to operate.</p>
Good Government and Public Accountability	HR 1188	Rep. Evardone	Inquiry into the alleged grossly disadvantageous lease contract entered into by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Philippine Exporters	The Committee, presided by Committee Vice Chair Rep. Doy Leachon (1st District, Oriental Mindoro), will continue its inquiry relative to HR 1188 in its next meeting.

<p>Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability</p>			<p>Confederation, Inc. (PhilExport), and Manila Exposition Complex, Inc. (MECI)</p>	<p>Commission on Audit (COA) Supervising Auditor Henedina Otadoy, the team leader of the concerned audit team, confirmed that in 2013, the Commission issued an Audit Observation Memorandum (AOM) to the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM), an attached agency of the DTI, citing that the contracts of lease and sublease entered into by the DTI (lessor), PhilExport (lessee), and MECI (sub-lessee) in January 1996 was grossly disadvantageous to the government.</p> <p>Otadoy said that the 2013 AOM was a reiteration of COA's 1996 audit report which also recommended for either termination or amendment of the questioned contract of lease.</p> <p>The contract involves the establishment of the World Trade Center Complex in Pasay City on a land owned by CITEM.</p> <p>Reps. Prospero Pichay Jr. (1st District, Surigao del Sur) and Gabriel Bordado (3rd District, Camarines Sur) inquired about the basis of the AOM.</p> <p>Otadoy explained that PhilExport and MECI violated the terms of the lease contract when they failed to maintain the leased property and allowed the use of the facility for purposes other than promoting Philippine trade and helping Filipino exporters.</p> <p>Otadoy also said that compared with the lease agreement between <i>Boom na Boom</i> Amusement Park and the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), the government's lease contract with PhilExport only involves a P1,000 annual rental fee while <i>Boom na Boom</i> was paying a much higher rental to CCP.</p> <p>Rep. Pichay, however, noted that the lease contract under investigation should not be compared with that of <i>Boom na Boom</i> because the latter operates for commercial purposes. On the other hand, the World Trade Center was designed to enhance and strengthen the country's export industry, citing Executive Order 289, series of 1995, which fixed the annual lease rate to P1,000.</p> <p>Asked by Eastern Samar Rep. Ben Evardone, author of HR 1188, of the action taken by CITEM regarding the AOM, CITEM Deputy Executive Director Maria Lourdes Mediran said that because the lease emanated from an executive order and the contract of lease was signed by former DTI Secretary Rizalino Navarro, the audit report was referred to the Office of the DTI Secretary which then forwarded the same to former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.</p> <p>The Committee decided to again invite DTI Secretary Ramon Lopez to the hearing with a warning that a show cause order will be issued to him if he fails to attend the inquiry for the third time.</p>
--	--	--	---	---

Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability				The Committee will likewise invite in its next meeting the MECI president and its shareholders.
Justice	Substitute Bill to HBs 350, 547, 3275, 4748, 5216 & 5233	Deputy Speaker Quimbo, Reps. Escudero, Roque (H.), Alejano, Chipeco, and Speaker Alvarez	Further strengthening the Office of the Solicitor General by increasing its powers and functions, and redefining, expanding, and rationalizing its organization, repealing for the purpose Republic Acts 9417 and 2327, and Executive Orders 1 and 2, series of 1986, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Reynaldo Umali (2nd District, Oriental Mindoro), approved the Substitute Bill to the six measures and its corresponding Committee Report.
Legislative Franchises	Substitute Bill to HBs 4513 and 6660	Reps. Vargas and Romualdo	Renewing the franchise granted to radio marine network, incorporated, under RA 4607, as amended by RA 7512	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Franz "Chicoy" Alvarez (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Palawan), approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HBs 4513 and 6660.
	Substitute Bill to HB 5265	Rep. Robes	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Peñafrancia Broadcasting Corporation under RA 8166, expanding its coverage from regional to national, and approving the transfer of its corporate shares	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HB 5265 and its corresponding Committee Report.
	HB 4906	Rep. Velasco	Extending for another 25 years the franchise granted to the Delta Broadcasting System, Inc. to establish, maintain and operate radio and television broadcasting stations within the Philippines under RA 7723	The Committee deferred consideration of HB 4906.  Rep. Anthony Bravo, PhD. (Party-List, COOP NATCCO) sponsored HB 4906 in behalf of the author, Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Jay Velasco.  When asked by Rep. Bravo about the scope of operation of the Delta Broadcasting System, Chief Engineer Sheen Sales replied that the company is operating one radio and one television station both based in Metro Manila.  Atty. Jade Wy, counsel for Delta Broadcasting System, Inc., added that the company has plans to expand its operations nationwide once its franchise is renewed for another 25 years.  The Committee requested Delta Broadcasting System, Inc. to submit its expansion plan including the projected cost of the expansion.
Natural Resources	Substitute Bill to HB 678	Rep. Eriguel	Reclassifying certain public lands within the strip of land five kilometers from either side of the Aspiras Highway, formerly known as Marcos Highway, from Agoon, La Union to Baguio City, covered by Proclamation 1754 as alienable and disposable lands	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Arnel Ty (Party-List, LPGMA), approved the Substitute Bill to HB 678.
	HB 2127	Rep. Salimbangon	Declaring certain lands of the public domain, located in the Municipalities of Bantayan, Daanbantayan, Madridejos, and Sta. Fe, all in the Province of Cebu, as agricultural land open to disposition for agricultural, commercial, residential, tourism, and other similar productive purposes, amending for the purpose Presidential Proclamation No. 2151	The Committee approved the bill.  DENR Region VII Assistant Regional Director for Management Services Emma Melana interposed no objection to the bill.

Continuation... Natural Resources			dated December 29, 1981 or the law declaring certain islands and/or parts of the country as wilderness areas	
	HB 2317	Rep. Dalog	Excluding from the operation of Proclamation No. 217, series of 1929, otherwise known as the Central Cordillera Forest Reserve, a certain portion of land embraced therein and declare the same alienable and disposable under Section 4 of RA 10023 (Residential Free Patent Act) dated March 9, 2010, in favor of the Luis Hora Memorial Regional Hospital located in Abatan, Bauko, Mountain Province for hospital purposes	The Committee approved the bill.  Forest Management Bureau's (FMB) Forest Land Use and Allocation Section Chief Amie Rabang proposed the conduct of an actual survey by a composite team from the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for the validation of the technical description of the area covered by the bill.
	HBs 3569, 5117, 5888, & 6133	Reps. Acosta Mercado, and Dy	Reclassifying/declaring certain parcels of land of the public domain in certain parts of the country as alienable and disposable lands	The Committee approved the four bills.
	HB 3727	Rep. Bravo (M.V.)	Establishing a mode of acquisition and disposition for agricultural lands within Ticao and Burias Islands, Province of Masbate declared as special eco-tourism zones or tourism enterprises zones, providing environmental safeguards therefor	The Committee approved the bill.
	HB 4385	Rep. Mangaoang	Reclassifying a certain parcel of land in Barangay Talalang in the Municipality of Balbalan, Province of Kalinga as a mineral land open for declaration as a people's small-scale mining area, amending for the purpose RA 6463	The Committee approved the bill.
	HB 5614	Speaker Alvarez	Declaring the Kalayaan Island Group located in the Municipality of Kalayaan, Province of Palawan as alienable and disposable land	The committee approved the bill.  Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Deputy Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Salvador Melchor Mison Jr. said that the AFP has development plans for the nine Kalayaan Group of Islands in the Province of Palawan amounting to P11.6 billion.  Mison said that these plans include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancement of the islands' habitability;</li> <li>• Construction of a berthing space for Philippine Navy vessels and other vessels;</li> <li>• Upgrading of the islands' defense structures;</li> <li>• Improvement of existing facilities like roads and air strip; and</li> <li>• Provision of water and power facilities and communication equipment.</li> </ul> Southern Leyte Rep. Roger "Oging" Mercado, who sponsored the bill on behalf of the principal author, Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Davao del Norte), stressed that the development of the Kalayaan Islands should be immediate, otherwise another foreign country will lay its claim on the area. Mercado added that the

Continuation... Natural Resources				bill's objective is to protect Philippine territory and strengthen its claims to the disputed areas.
	HB 6491	Rep. Marquez	Declaring as agricultural lands certain parcels of land of the public domain situated in Malay, Aklan	The Committee approved the bill.
	HBs 1361 & 2162	Reps. Paduano and Yap (M.)	Declaring a parcel of land of the public domain as an agricultural land for town site purpose in the Municipality of Salvador Benedicto, Province of Negros Occidental	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate and harmonize the two bills.  Meriden Maranan, chief of the Caves, Wetlands and Other Ecosystems Division, Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), DENR proposed that an actual ground survey be conducted to rectify the errors in the technical description of the area, as stated in the bills.  Agreeing with the suggestion of Maranan, Rabang added that some areas covered by the bills are prone to landslides.
	HB 6046	Rep. Villanueva	Reclassifying/declaring certain parcels of land of the public domain located in the different Barangays of Anupul, San Nicolas, San Roque and Lourdes, all in the Municipality of Bamban, Province of Tarlac from unclassified lands into alienable and disposable lands.	The Committee agreed to create a TWG to deliberate further on the bill.
Population and Family Relations	Substitute Bill to HBs 1629 & 3705	Deputy Speaker Garcia and Rep. Romualdez	Recognizing the civil effects of church decreed annulment	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sol Aragonés (3 <sup>rd</sup> District, Laguna), approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 1629 and 3705 subject to style and amendment. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.  Reverend Father Jerome Secillano, executive secretary of the Public Affairs Committee of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), informed the Committee of a decree signed by Pope Francis that modifies the procedure for obtaining annulments by shortening the process and allowing local bishops to personally judge on "particularly evident" cases.
	HB 116	Rep. Lagman	Instituting absolute divorce in the Philippines	The Committee agreed to draft a Substitute Bill to the four measures.
	HB 1062	Rep. Barbers	Amending Title I, Chapter 3, of EO 209, otherwise known as the Family Code of the Philippines, prescribing additional ground for annulment	
	HB 2380	Rep. De Jesus	Introducing divorce in the Philippines, amending for the purpose Articles 26, 55 to 66 and repealing Article 36 under Title II of EO 209, as amended	
	HB 6027	Rep. Baguilat	Providing for grounds for the dissolution of marriage	
	HB 6446	Deputy Speaker Cayetano	Recognizing the capacity of the Filipino spouse to remarry when the alien spouse has obtained a foreign judicial decree of absolute divorce, amending for the purpose EO 209	The Committee agreed to draft a Substitute Bill to HB 6446.

Public Works and Highways	HBs 2760, 2888 & 3957	Reps. Erice Villafuerte, and Gatchalian	Converting certain roads in Caloocan City, Camarines Sur, and Valenzuela City, respectively, into national roads and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Celso Lobregat (1st District, Zamboanga City), approved HBs 2760, 2888 and 3957 and the corresponding Committee Reports, upon the favorable endorsement by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for having passed the criteria for road conversion.
	HBs 395, 944, 946, 1244, 1245, 1424, 2342, 2421, 2422, 2756, 2885, 2887, 2889, 2891, 2892, 2895, 2896, 2939, 2940, 3638, 4121, 4123, 4164, 4611, 4910, 4911, 4912, 4913, 4918, 4919, 4969, 4970, 5743, 5760 & 5764	Reps. Panganiban, Tiangco, Villafuerte, Cosalan, Caminero, Dimaporo (A.), Arbison, Salimbangon, Gatchalian, Martinez, Go (A.), Garin (O.), Nolasco, and Tolentino	Converting municipal/provincial roads into national roads in various parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the remaining 35 bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Lobregat apprised the body that in the previous meeting of the Committee, the DPWH Secretary and its Undersecretaries have agreed to create a task group that will review and modify its current implementing guidelines or criteria for road conversion so that other bills proposing the conversion of roads will be accommodated.</p> <p>DPWH Undersecretary Dimas Soguilon confirmed that the Department is in the process of crafting its new guidelines.</p> <p>Meanwhile, The Asia Foundation policy consultant Joel Lasam informed the Committee of the Foundation's ongoing initiative to construct a map comprising all local roads in the country using the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) standards. The map of local roads, when compared with the DPWH map of national roads, will facilitate the identification of road gaps and roads that are eligible for conversion.</p> <p>The Committee Chair and the Members, as well as Undersecretary Soguilon, lauded this initiative of the The Asia Foundation, saying that having a road master plan will not only enhance local road network connectivity, but will also render a holistic and integrated approach to road development.</p>
Transportation	HB 5076	Reps. Robes	Establishing the Land Transportation Office (LTO) San Jose del Monte City satellite office and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, approved the bill subject to style.
	HB 6687	Rep. Rodriguez (I.)	Establishing a regular district office of the LTO in the Municipality of Morong, Rizal, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the bill subject to style.
	HBs 757 & 1497	Reps. Aglipay-Villar and Abayon	Prescribing school bus safety standards	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate and discuss the two bills.</p> <p>Rep. Emmeline Aglipay-Villar (Party-List, DIWA), author of HB 757, said that in light of the increasing number of road accidents involving school buses, there is a need to professionalize the school bus industry and along with it, set standards that will ensure the safety of school bus passengers.</p> <p>Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City) lauded the intention of the bill, adding that majority of the school buses in the</p>

Continuation... Transportation				<p>country are not compliant with international standards. Rep. Castelo also said that aside from the competency of bus drivers, attention must also be given to the road-worthiness of the vehicles.</p> <p>LTO Operations Division head Mercy Jane Paras-Leynes expressed her support for the bill. She agreed with the idea of requiring school bus owners to provide first aid kits as well as install seatbelts in all their buses.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento asked about the regulatory measures being implemented by the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) with regard to school bus operations.</p> <p>LTFRB Board Member Ronald Corpus said that LTFRB, for one thing, has already implemented its policy of phasing out school service units that are more than 15 years old as well as units that have side-to-side seating.</p>
	HB 859	Deputy Speaker Villarica	Requiring driver's education for all professional truck drivers and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on HB 859.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Gavini "Apol" Pancho (2nd District, Bulacan).</p> <p>Resource persons from the LTFRB, the Philippine Global Road Safety Board (PGRSB), Alliance of Concerned Transport Operators (ACTO), and Confederation of Truckers Association of the Philippines (CTAP) expressed no objection to the proposed law.</p> <p>CTAP Chairman Ruperto Bayocot informed the Committee that the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) offers a course for drivers of passenger buses and straights trucks.</p> <p>Likewise, LTFRB Board Member Ronald Corpus said that the LTFRB also has a Driver's Academy which conducts seminars required for truck drivers. The LTFRB was asked to submit a list of the drivers who have undergone training in the Academy.</p> <p>Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon suggested that the LTFRB and TESDA should work together to integrate the two training programs.</p>
	HB 2799	Rep. Vergara	Providing for a Magna Carta for Tricycle Drivers and Operators, institutionalizing mechanisms for its implementation	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to deliberate further on HB 2799.</p> <p>Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija) highlighted the importance of the tricycle industry especially in providing service and employment to a lot of Filipinos. She added that aside from protecting the rights of the tricycle drivers who belong to the lower income strata, ensuring the safety of their passengers and the quality of their service should be given equal importance.</p>

Continuation... Transportation				<p>Rep. Rodel Batocabe (Party-List, AKO BICOL) expressed his support for the bill, adding that there is a need to rationalize the operation of tricycles in the country for the benefit of the drivers, passengers and other road users.</p> <p>Rep. Fernando Gonzalez (3rd District, Albay) also expressed his support for the bill but asked that representatives of local government units be consulted as the function of regulating tricycles has already been devolved to their level.</p>
	HB 3477	Rep. Escudero	Amending Section 6 of RA 8794, by lowering the maximum permissible truck loadings in the country	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on HB 3477.</p> <p>Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City) said that the Committee Members must be provided with sufficient and reliable information, such as the number of road accidents involving trucks, for them to be able to make the right decision on what to do with the bill.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Gonzalez suggested the inclusion of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) as one of the members of the TWG which may have relevant views on the effect of the proposal on the trucking industry.</p>
	HB 6455	Speaker Alvarez	Providing for a speedy processing by the LTO of the registration of imported motor vehicles and providing penalties for violation thereof	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 6455 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1st District, Davao del Norte) chided the LTO for the slow and inefficient registration process for imported motor vehicles. He said that certain requirements such as the Certificate of Emission Compliance (CEC) for brand new, imported cars are unnecessary. He also asked LTO to provide the Committee with an update on the status of the procurement of license plates, noting that no new license plates have been issued by the agency for some years now.</p> <p>LTO Operations Division head Mercy Jane Paras-Leynes, while agreeing that some requirements may not be necessary, informed the Committee that RA 10883 or the New Anti-Carnapping Act of 2016 provides the basis for the list of requirements that the LTO is currently imposing.</p> <p>As for the license plates, Leynes disclosed that the bidding process will be completed before the end of the first quarter of 2018.</p> <p>In light of the many unresolved problems at the LTO, Speaker Alvarez urged the resignation of LTO Chief Edgar Galvante.</p>

**IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS**

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>SUBJECT MATTER</b>	<b>ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION</b>
Justice	Determination of probable cause in relation to the verified complaint for impeachment against Supreme Court Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno, filed by Atty. Lorenzo Gadon and endorsed by 25 House Members	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Reynaldo Umali (2nd District, Oriental Mindoro), will continue its hearing on the determination of probable cause with regard to the impeachment complaint against the Chief Justice in its next meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Umali gave a summary of the facts gathered during the previous hearing. He said that based on the testimonies of the witnesses, it would indicate that the creation of the Special Committee on Retirement and Civil Service Benefits, and subsequently the two technical working groups (TWGs), one for the screening of benefit claim applications and the other for legal matters, slowed down the resolution of the applications for roughly two years.</p> <p>Afterwhich, Supreme Court en banc Clerk of Court Felipa Anama manifested that she attended the hearing merely to submit the certified copies of the documents which the Committee previously requested. She likewise explained that her name was not included in the Supreme Court resolution dated November 28, 2017 allowing justices and other Supreme Court officials to appear and testify in the impeachment proceedings.</p> <p>However, Rep. Umali countered that the invitation sent to Anama by the Committee requested her to appear to answer questions relevant to the impeachment proceedings, and not just to be a courier of documents.</p> <p>Anama was then requested by the lawmakers to comment on the accusation that the Chief Justice tried to distance herself from the Supreme Court Order dated June 6, 2017 transferring cases against the members of Maute terrorist group from Marawi City to Cagayan de Oro City. The request of Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II earlier made with the Supreme Court was to transfer the cases from Marawi City to Metro Manila.</p> <p>However, Anama invoked Sec. 3, Rule 7 of the internal rules of the Supreme Court on the confidentiality of assigning cases and refused to identify the member-in-charge in the aforesaid Maute case.</p> <p>Only after Rep. Umali and several other lawmakers pointed out to Anama that the Chief Justice had already admitted in her counter-affidavit that she was the member-in-charge in the aforesaid case, did Anama admit that the assignment of the case was not done by raffle, but instead specifically assigned to Sereno.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Atty. Jocelyn Fabian, chairperson of the two Supreme Court TWGs, testified that prior to the creation of the special committee in 2015 there was much disagreement on whether the law granting additional benefits to the members of the Judiciary should be implemented retroactively, given that the Supreme Court en banc issued different rulings on the matter. This, she said, prompted the creation of the special committee in order to make the application of the rules consistent.</p> <p>Likewise, Deputy Clerk of Court Anna-li Papa-Gombio said that the matter of survivorship benefits involves not only the issue of retroactivity but other important issues that need to be studied and assessed comprehensively and holistically.</p>

**TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS**

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Government Reorganization jt. w/ Transportation (Technical Working Group)	HBs 190, 1725, 2731, 3116, 5042 & 5480	Reps. Bravo, Biazon, Alejano, Villafuerte, Deputy Speaker Garcia, and Rep. Vargas	Creating the Philippine Transportation Safety Board and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), co-presided by Rep. Ron Salo (Party-List, KABAYAN), of the Committee on Government Reorganization, and Rep. Edgar Sarmiento (1st District, Samar), Vice Chair of the Committee on Transportation, will deliberate further on the six bills in its next meeting. It agreed to use HBs 190 and 2731, authored by Reps. Anthony Bravo Ph.D. and Gary Alejano (Party-List, MAGDALO), as the working draft.</p> <p>Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, chair of the Committee on Transportation, manifested that the bills have been approved on Second Reading during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress but were not enacted due to time constraints.</p> <p>The representative of government agencies present in the meeting, while expressing support to the intent of the proposed law, pointed out that they are already performing most of the functions of the proposed Philippine Transportation Safety Board (PTSB) or they are currently implementing programs aimed at ensuring transportation safety.</p> <p>Department of Transportation (DOTr) Assistant Secretary Amulfo Fabillar said that the DOTr is currently implementing its road safety program under the Philippine Road Safety Action Plan 2017-2022.</p> <p>Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) lawyer Joseph Gumabon said that CAAP has an Aircraft Accident Investigation and Inquiry Board (AAIIB) that is responsible for the investigation of air accidents within the Philippines and incidents involving Philippine aircraft occurring within and outside the Philippines.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Salo with regard to countries which have their own national transportation safety board, Gumabon replied that countries like the United States and Europe have their own transportation safety board.</p> <p>Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) Deputy Executive Director Porvenir Porciuncula emphasized that CAB is mandated to regulate, promote and develop the economic aspect of air transportation and has jurisdiction over air carriers, general sales agents, cargo sales agents, and air freight forwarders.</p> <p>Maritime Industry Authority's (MARINA) Director for Management, Financial and Administrative Services (MFAS) Sonia Malaluan said that MARINA is tasked to issue policies and conduct investigations on maritime safety. Malaluan also said that, like other countries, the agency has adopted the Code of the International Standards and Recommended Practices for a Safety</p>

<p>Continuation... Government Reorganization jt. w/ Transportation (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>Investigation into a Maritime Casualty or Marine Incident (Casualty Investigation Code).</p> <p>Lawyer Joana Aguilar of the Office for Transportation Security (OTS) recommended that the jurisdiction of the proposed board be confined to the implementation of safety standards in the transportation industry and not to include the security aspect which is the mandate of the OTS.</p> <p>Helen Holgado, budget specialist from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), emphasized that the functions of the proposed board are already being carried out by the different government agencies. Holgado added that the existing agencies be strengthened instead of creating another body.</p> <p>Resource persons present in the meeting were requested to submit their position papers for the consideration of the TWG.</p>
<p>Health (Technical Working Group)</p>	<p>Substitute Bill to HBs 268, 716, 897, 1578, 1851, 1964, 2579, 2798, 3089, 3365, 3441, 3497, 3500, 4707, 5378, 5387, 5763, 6153, 6210, 6280, &amp; 6299, HR 786 and Privilege Speech 195</p>	<p>Reps. Roman, Vargas, Tan (A.), Suansing (E.), Rodriguez (M.), Aragonés, Castelo, Escudero, Alejano, Bolilia, Gatchalian, Nogralés (K. A.), Roa-Puno, Herrera-Dy, and Lanete</p>	<p>Institutionalizing a national integrated cancer control program and appropriating funds therefor</p>	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Sandra Young Eriguel, M.D. (2nd District, La Union), approved the Substitute Bill to the 23 measures with amendments.</p> <p>Rep. Geraldine Roman (1st District, Bataan), one of the authors of the proposed measure, underscored the importance of creating regional cancer centers that will cater to the needs of cancer patients and at the same time conduct research, treatment, and trainings.</p>
<p>Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples (Technical Working Group)</p>	<p>HB 3558</p>	<p>Rep. Cuaresma</p>	<p>Ensuring equal employment opportunities to members of indigenous cultural communities (ICCs) and preference in certain cases</p>	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma, will deliberate further on HB 3558 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Employers Confederation of the Philippines' (ECOP) Legal Service Manager Robert Maronilla questioned the proposed penalty of imprisonment of six months to six years against employers who violate the provisions of the proposed law. He lamented that such penalties are excessive and detrimental to the constitutional right of employers.</p> <p>Maronilla also expressed objection to the provision mandating every private enterprise with operations in areas where ICCs predominate to give preferential employment to members of these communities by hiring them into at least 10% of its labor force.</p> <p>Rep. Cuaresma, however, emphasized that preferential employment for members of the ICCs by both the government and private sector is the very essence of the bill, which guarantees the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples (IPs).</p>

Continuation... Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples (Technical Working Group)				<p>Likewise, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Region II Director Ruben Bastero stressed that the proposed law is intended to address the displacement of members of the ICCs and IPs due to the exploitation of resources and disruption of their livelihood within their respective ancestral domains by business entities.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to incorporate in the bill the pertinent comments and suggestions of the resource persons during the meeting.</p>
Public Order and Safety (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 1347 & 1607	Reps. Acop and Cagas	Providing for the mechanism for the determination of the propriety of filing criminal complaint against alleged possessors of unlicensed ammunition under certain conditions, amending for the purpose RA 10591, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunitions Act and providing penalties for violations thereof	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Edgar Sarmiento (1st District, Samar), approved the draft Substitute Bill to HBs 1347 and 1607 with amendments.</p> <p>The substitute bill will be submitted to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento said that the bill seeks to amend RA 10591 to protect passengers from the illegal scheme of planting evidence (such as bullets) in a passenger's luggage in order to extort money from the latter.</p> <p>The following resource persons gave their respective comments and recommendations on the proposed law: Firearms and Explosives Office (FEO), Aviation Security Group (AVSEGROUP), Civil Security Group (CSG), and Directorate for Operations (DO) of the Philippine National Police (PNP); National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM); Philippine Ports Authority (PPA); Office of the Transportation Security (OTS) of the Department of Transportation (DOTr); Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA); and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).</p>

AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Ecology	<p>Briefing on the status of implementation of RA 9275 or the Clean Water Act of 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manila Water Company Incorporated (Manila Water)</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), listened to the briefing conducted by the two water concessionaires in Metro Manila and the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) on their accomplishments pursuant to RA 9275.</p> <p>Manila Water's Water Sources and Environmental Planning Department head Noelito Abesamis discussed the company's major accomplishments and ongoing and future projects based on its Sanitation and Sewerage Master Plan in compliance with RA 9275.</p> <p>Under a concession agreement with the government, Manila Water is the exclusive provider of water and wastewater services in the East Zone of Metro Manila.</p> <p>From 2013 up to 2017, Abesamis said Manila Water was able to accomplish the following: completion of the feasibility study for other catchments; application of new technology in wastewater systems; and facility instrumentation and control. Moving forward, Abesamis said that Manila Water aims to complete the construction of additional sewerage treatment plants (STPs) and attain 100% service coverage in its concession area.</p>



<p>Continuation... Ecology</p>		<p>Program which seeks to reduce water pollution, identify pollution hotspots, and regulate the use or occupancy of the Laguna de Bay shoreland; and the National Greening Program which targets to plant 1.5 billion seedlings in 1.5 million hectares nationwide from 2011 to 2016.</p> <p>In the ensuing discussion, Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP) inquired on the status of the sewerage and septage program of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) pursuant to Section 7 of RA 9275.</p> <p>Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Maria Paz Luna said that the DPWH has allocated P2 billion per year for the Manila Second Sewerage Project (MSSP) based on a 40/60 government/LGU sharing scheme for the 17 highly urbanized cities in Metro Manila. Unfortunately, the project was not rolled out since there were no LGUs willing to participate in it.</p> <p>Local Water Utilities Administration's (LWUA) Central Program Support Office for Sewerage and Sanitation Division Manager Catalino Jose apprised the Committee that the 40/60 sharing scheme has now been changed to 50/50 and aside from the 17 highly urbanized cities, first class municipalities are now included in the project.</p>
<p>North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>	<p>Briefing by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) on its FY 2018 budget and plans and programs for North Luzon</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano (1st District, Ilocos Sur), listened to the presentation of the DPWH on its FY 2018 budget and plans and programs for North Luzon.</p> <p>DPWH-Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR) Director Nerie Bueno apprised the Committee that under the FY 2018 National Expenditure Program (NEP), CAR is set to receive P18.03 billion which will be distributed to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abra – P3.12 billion;</li> <li>• Apayao – P2.85 billion;</li> <li>• Baguio City – P1.22 billion;</li> <li>• Benguet – P3.97 billion;</li> <li>• Ifugao – P2.46 billion;</li> <li>• Kalinga – P2.10 billion;</li> <li>• Mt. Province – P2.16 billion; and</li> <li>• Regionwide projects – P138 million.</li> </ul> <p>For year 2018 and beyond, Bueno said that the DPWH-CAR will be constructing new roads, paving the remaining unpaved national roads, and implementing the flagship projects in the region, among others.</p> <p>Due to time constraints, the Committee decided to forego with the presentations of DPWH Regions I and II.</p> <p>The Committee Members discussed their respective concerns with the DPWH regional directors in North Luzon, particularly on various infrastructure projects in their districts.</p>