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BICAMERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Bicameral Conference Committee	HB 6579 and SB 1311	Rep. Biron and Senator Zubiri	Promoting ease of doing business and efficient delivery of government services by amending the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2017	<p>The Bicameral Conference Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Ferjanel Biron, M.D. (4th District, Iloilo), Chair of the House Committee on Trade and Industry, and Senator Juan Miguel "Migz" Zubiri, Chair of the Senate Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship, approved the reconciled version of HB 6579 and SB 1311.</p> <p>Other conferees who were present during the bicameral conference committee meeting were the following: Reps. Xavier Jesus Romualdo (Camiguin), Manuel Zubiri (3rd District, Bohol), Arthur Yap (3rd District, Bohol), Bernadette Herrera-Dy (Party-List, BAGONG HENERASYON), Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija), and Arlene Arcillas (1st District, Laguna).</p>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Health	Substitute Bill to HBs 621, 2466, 3924, 4391, 5503, 5914, 6356, 6526, 6667 & 6969, and HRs 244, 1048 & 1490	Reps. Paduano, Yap (A.), Vargas, Tan (A.), Go (M.), Silverio, Deputy Speaker Villarica, Reps. Aquino-Magsaysay, Villafuerte, Hofer, Zarate, Lanete, and De Vera	Providing a comprehensive renal replacement therapy for patients with end stage renal disease in national, regional, and provincial government hospitals and increasing the PhilHealth package rate for renal replacement therapy of members and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4th District, Quezon), approved the Committee Report on the substitute bill.
	HB 2905	Rep. Kho	Increasing the bed capacity of the Masbate Provincial Hospital (MPH) in the province of Masbate from 100 to 200 beds, upgrading the service facilities and professional health care therein, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 2905, subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>The Department of Health (DOH) interposed no objection to the bill, but recommended that the provincial government should provide the necessary maintenance and other operating expenses for the upgrading of service facilities</p>

Continuation... Health				and professional health care services of the MPH. On the other hand, the DOH will provide the additional capital outlay requirement of the MPH.
	HB 3144	Rep. Savellano	Increasing the bed capacity of Sinait District Hospital in Sinait, Ilocos Sur from 25 to 100 and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 3144 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 4618	Rep. Cortes	Increasing the bed capacity of Eversley Childs Sanitarium Hospital in the Province of Cebu from 50 to 200 bed capacity, upgrading its service facilities and professional healthcare, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HBs 4618 and 4619 subject to consolidation. DOH interposed no objection to the bills but recommended that the increase in bed capacity should be consistent with the five-year development plan of the hospital. It likewise expressed support for the renaming of the hospital to reflect its expanded mandate and services.
	HB 4619	Rep. Cortes	Changing the name of Eversley Childs Sanitarium Hospital to Eversley Childs Sanitarium and General Hospital	
	HB 5791	Rep. Sandoval	Converting the San Lorenzo Ruiz Women's Hospital in Malabon City into a general hospital to be known as the Malabon City General Hospital, increasing its bed capacity from 10 to 100 beds and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the bill.
	HB 7027	Rep. Unabia	Converting the Medina Hospital in the Municipality of Medina, province of Misamis Oriental to an extension hospital of the Northern Mindanao Medical Center, Cagayan de Oro City, to be known as the Northern Mindanao Medical Center Extension Hospital	The Committee approved the bill subject to style and amendment. The DOH interposed no objection to the bill, provided that it should have a provision stating that the proposed extension hospital of the Northern Mindanao Medical Center will separate from the main hospital once the former is already financially capable to sustain its operations.
	HB 3310	Rep. Macapagal-Arroyo	Making available electronic records of all patients of hospitals and clinics, establishing for this purpose the Electronic Medical Record Center under the Department of Health (DOH), appropriating funds therefor	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate and study the bills further. Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga), author of HB 3310, said that her bill seeks to provide easy and immediate access to one's own medical records electronically over the internet. She said that with the proposed law, patients do not have to physically request for a copy of their medical records in case there is a need to produce them.
	HBs 4630 & 7153	Reps. Nieto and Yap (V.)	Establishing the Philippine e-Health systems and services in the delivery of health services with the use of information and communications technology in the Philippines and appropriating funds therefor	Dr. Raymond Francis Sarmiento, director of the University of the Philippines (UP) National Telehealth Center expressed support for the bills. He, however, raised doubts on the capability and sustainability of establishing a telehealth center hub that will handle the electronic medical records (EMRs) of all Filipinos. He also recommended that the proposed law should be consistent with the provisions of RA 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012.
	HB 5810	Rep. Lanete	Establishing telehealth centers in every hospital in the country, establishing a mechanism therefor, providing funds therefor	Representatives from government agencies such as the DOH and the Department of Information

Continuation... Health				<p>and Communications Technology (DICT), as well as private organizations such as the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) expressed support for the bill.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the representatives from the Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP), National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKT), and Philippine Children's Medical Center (PCMC) expressed reservation on the bills, saying that telehealth centers are more applicable in remote areas.</p>
	HB 6934	Rep. Villarín	Instituting a Philippine National Autism care plan for the support of persons with autism and for other purposes	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to study the bill further.</p> <p>Representatives from the Autism Society Philippines (ASP), Philippine Academy of Occupational Therapists, Inc. (PAOT), and Philippine Association of Speech Pathologists expressed support for the bill.</p>
	HBs 5355 & 6986	Reps. Vargas and Herrera-Dy	Providing a standard of care for the treatment of persons with bleeding disorders, establishing treatment centers and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to consolidate and study the bills further.</p> <p>Representatives from the Philippine Society of Hematology and Blood Transfusion (PSHBT) expressed support for the bills, saying that the proposed law will address the growing needs of patients suffering from life-long bleeding disorders that cause too much burden to them and their families.</p>
Information and Communications Technology	HB 262	Rep. Villafuerte	Establishing the E-Government, defining its powers and functions, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Victor Yap (2nd District, Tarlac), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on HB 262.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte Jr. (2nd District, Camarines Sur).</p> <p>Rep. Yap remarked that the bill aims to establish an effective e-Government plan that would create more valuable and meaningful services and lessen corruption by minimizing human intervention in government transactions.</p> <p>Rep. Villafuerte, also the author of HB 262, enumerated the benefits and programs that are included in the proposed e-Government Master Plan. He also cited several e-Governments around the world and reported that based on the United Nations e-Government survey, the Philippines ranked 71st in the 2016 e-Government Development Index (EGDI).</p> <p>Director Teresa Magno-Garcia of the National ICT Governance Service, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), said that the DICT is in the process of formulating the "e-Gov Master Plan 2.0" – a blueprint for the harmonization and integration of the government's ICT efforts.</p>

Continuation... Information and Communications Technology	HBs 2333, 2604, 2872, 4654 & 5109	Reps. Cojuangco, Santos-Recto, Yap (V.), Lazatin, and Castelo	Prohibiting telecommunications companies (telcos) from imposing an expiration period on the validity of prepaid call and text cards and the forfeiture of load credits, providing penalties for violations thereof	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the nine measures.</p> <p>Rep. Bernadette Herrera-Dy (Party-List, BAGONG HENERASYON), author of HR 254, said that one of the reasons for loss of load credits is the automatic enrolment of the subscribers' mobile numbers in different promotions of telcos which consume the former's load. She pointed out that subscribers should not be required to reply to an unsolicited promotion if they are interested or not and that inaction on their part should already mean disinterest.</p> <p>Rep. Yap believes that the NTC is not fully exercising its powers to regulate the telecommunications industry, otherwise the enactment of a law to address the issues raised in the resolutions may no longer be necessary.</p> <p>Atty. Ariel Tubayan of Globe Telecoms opined that the NTC is empowered to prescribe rules and regulations on prepaid load, thus there is no need to enact a law on the matter. He disclosed that last December 2017, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), DICT and NTC issued a Joint Memorandum Circular (MC) which provided for an expiration of load cards in one year regardless of the load amount. However, the implementation of this Joint MC was extended to June 2018 on the request of the telcos which had to address some logistical problems first.</p> <p>Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), author of HR 100, stressed that Congress should continue to pursue the legislative inquiry into the "vanishing" prepaid loads even with the Joint Memo Circular.</p> <p>DTI Undersecretary Ruth Castelo also said that there is still a need for an enabling law on the one-year expiry period of prepaid cards to allow the NTC to file criminal charges against violators.</p> <p>Representatives from the two giant telcos in the country, Globe and Smart, said that load watch and hotlines have been set up to readily respond to the complaints of their subscribers.</p> <p>In its next meeting, the Committee will invite the technical people of telcos to explain their request for the six-month extension period for the implementation of the Joint MC.</p>
	HB 2447	Rep. Yap (A.)	Prohibiting the imposition of expiration of prepaid cards, certificates or other devices of prepayment of goods and services, providing penalties for violations thereof	
	HB 3268	Rep. Roque (H.)	Prohibiting cellular mobile phone providers from conveying unsought services that are automatically and involuntarily charged against the account of subscribers, imposing penalties on unlawful acts of the providers	
	HR 100	Rep. Castelo	Investigation into the numerous complaints of subscribers on public telecommunications companies on massive loss of prepaid loads even before they consume them	
	HR 254	Rep. Herrera-Dy	Inquiry into the current validity periods for prepaid load credits, with the aim of prohibiting any kind of expiration period on the validity of the prepaid load credits, as well as calling the attention of the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) and the Office of the President (OP) over the same issues	
Justice	HB 5897	Majority Leader Fariñas	Granting survivorship benefits to the dependent children of a deceased retired member of the Judiciary, who is a solo parent as defined under RA 8972, and the surviving parents, or nominated persons of the deceased retiree, amending RA 910 as amended by RA 9946	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Reynaldo Umali (2nd District, Oriental Mindoro), approved HB 5897.</p> <p>Resource persons from the Sandiganbayan, Court of Appeals (CA), Court of Tax Appeals (CTA), and the Philippine Judges Association (PJA) expressed their support for the bill.</p>

Continuation... Justice				On the other hand, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), through Assistant Director Evelyn Peralta, expressed its reservation on the measure and maintained that the retirement benefit of the members of the Judiciary is already high enough, with automatic indexation where the monthly pension is adjusted whenever there is an increase in the salary of the previously held position of the retired member.
	HB 7163	Majority Leader Fariñas	Penalizing the act of throwing hard objects at motor vehicles	The Committee approved HB 7163. A bill with similar subject matter was approved on third and final reading during the 16 th Congress.
	Substitute Bills to HBs 3113, 5718 & 5985	Reps. Bolilia, Almario, and Rocamora	Creating additional branches of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) and Municipal Trial Court (MTC) in the provinces of Batangas, Davao Oriental and Siquijor, amending for the purpose Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, as amended, otherwise known as the Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Substitute Bills to HBs 3113, 5718 and 5985 and their corresponding Committee Reports.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 6085 & 6086	Rep. Mangudadatu (S.)	Creating two additional branches of the Regional Trial Court in the 12 th Judicial Region to be stationed in the City of Tacurong and in the Municipality of Isulan, Province of Sultan Kudarat, and appropriating funds therefor, amending for the purpose Section 14 (M) of Batas Pambansa Bilang 129	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 6085 and 6086 with amendments, and the corresponding Committee Report.
	Substitute Bills to HBs 4405 & 6262	Rep. Lazatin and Deputy Speaker Garcia	Granting Philippine Citizenship to Bruce Donald Mctavish and Kwok Hing Carlos Yeung	The Committee approved the Substitute Bills to HBs 4405 and 6262 and their corresponding Committee Reports.
	HBs 3256, 3618, 4091, 4379, 4779, 5838, 6091, 6238 & 6293	Reps. Salceda, Belmonte (J.C.), Deputy Speaker Quimbo, Reps. Yap (A.), Del Rosario, Umali, Deputy Speaker Hernandez, Reps. Salon, and Villafuerte	Removing the restrictions under certain sections of Commonwealth Act 141 or the Public Land Act, as amended, on free patent issued under Section 44 thereof	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate and fine tune the nine measures. Rep. Vicente "Ching" Veloso (3rd District, Leyte) will act as the TWG Chair. Resource persons from the Department of Justice (DOJ), Land Registration Authority (LRA), Land Management Bureau (LMB), and the Foundation for Economic Freedom (FEF) expressed their support for the bills.
Local Government jt. w/ Muslim Affairs and Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 92, 6121, 6263 & 6475	Deputy Speaker Sema, Reps. Macapagal-Arroyo and Dimaporo (M.K.), and Speaker Alvarez	Providing for the Basic Law for the Bangsamoro and abolishing the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), repealing for the purpose RA 9054, or the law strengthening and expanding the Organic Act for the ARMM, and RA 6734 or the law providing for an Organic Act for the ARMM	The Joint Committee, chaired by Reps. Pedro Acharon Jr. (1st District, South Cotabato and General Santos City), Mauyag "Jun" Papandayan Jr. (2nd District, Lanao del Sur), and Ruby Sahali (Tawi-Tawi), for the Committees on Local Government and on Muslim Affairs, and the Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, respectively, will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting. Rep. Celso Lobregat (1st District, Zamboanga City) challenged the constitutionality of the automatic inclusion of six municipalities in Lanao

<p><i>Continuation...</i> Local Government jt. w/ Muslim Affairs and Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity</p>				<p>del Norte and 39 barangays in Cotabato in the proposed Bangsamoro political entity.</p> <p>Citing the records of the 1986 Constitutional Commission proceedings, Rep. Lobregat explained that the second paragraph of Section 18, Article X of the 1987 Philippine Constitution intended that only provinces and cities, deliberately excluding municipalities and barangays, shall vote for the creation of the autonomous region.</p> <p>The particular provision in the Constitution states that “The creation of the autonomous region shall be effective when approved by majority of the votes cast by the constituent units in a plebiscite called for the purpose, provided that only provinces, cities, and geographic areas voting favorably in such plebiscite shall be included in the autonomous region.”</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo (1st District, Lanao del Norte), author of HB 6263, opposes the provision in the draft bill which states that five years after the ratification of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) and every five years thereafter for a period of 25 years, a plebiscite shall be held in the cities, municipalities and other geographical areas which may want to be part of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BAR).</p> <p>Rep. Dimaporo described this provision as a “creeping expansion” of the BAR, stressing that 25 years is too long a period for the delineation and delimitation of the Bangsamoro.</p> <p>On the annual block grant, which is the share of the Bangsamoro in the internal revenue of the National Government, Commissioner Raisa Jajurie of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) said that it will be automatically released to the BAR without presenting its budget proposal to Congress. Jajurie went on to say that the unspent amount in the block grant “shall revert to the Bangsamoro General Fund for re-appropriation.”</p> <p>Rep. Dimaporo countered that the unspent budget should revert back to the National Treasury.</p> <p>With regard to the concern of Rep. Sahali over the adverse effect of the proposed law to the ARMM employees, BTC Commissioner Jose Lorena gave assurance that the welfare of the affected employees will be taken care of and they will continue to perform their functions until the transition plan has been completed and adopted.</p> <p>The BTC Commissioners concurred with the proposal of creating an Office of the Deputy Ombudsman in the BAR to strengthen good governance in the autonomous region.</p>
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Continuation... Local Government jt. w/ Muslim Affairs and Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity				<p>Director Anthony Mandap of the Law Division, Office of Legal Affairs of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) expressed his support for the proposed law and promised to submit to the Joint Committee the position paper of DFA.</p> <p>The Joint Committee will invite Atty. Arifa Ala of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to discuss the proposal to establish an Islamic Banking Unit in the BSP.</p>
North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)	HR 1618	Rep. Savellano	Directing the Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to devise a detailed mechanism to effectuate a systematized coordination among all the District Representatives of North Luzon, as well as an effective information dissemination with respect to DTI's "ROLL IT" (Roads Leveraging Linkages for Industry and Trade) Program and such other programs or projects that will boost the growth of domestic and foreign investments.	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano (1st District, Ilocos Sur), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on the four measures.</p> <p>OIC-Regional Executive Director Roy Abaya of the Department of Agriculture Region III Office apprised the Committee of the stages involved in the crafting of the Philippine Rural Development Plan (PRDP). PRDP is a six-year project of the DA designed to establish a platform that would create a modern, climate-smart and market-oriented agriculture and fisheries sector that will raise incomes, productivity, and competitiveness in the countryside.</p> <p>As presented by Abaya, following are the stages observed by the DA in crafting the PRDP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Planning - harmonizes the regional and provincial agriculture and fisheries modernization plan through a value chain approach leading to the creation of the Provincial Commodity Investment Plan (PCIP); • Infrastructure Development - improves the efficiency of the transportation system for agricultural goods from the production areas to the markets; • Enterprise Development - further develops viable agri-fishery based enterprises by strengthening the collaboration between the DA and the local government units (LGUs) and ensuring an efficient value chain for key regional agri-fishery products; and • Project Support - establishes standards on services and technical assistance and provides an effective mode of engagement with the LGUs in order to have an efficient and effective project management and implementation. <p>The resource persons were requested to coordinate with the offices of District Representatives in the planning and implementation of programs and projects in their respective districts.</p>
	HR 1619	Rep. Savellano	Urging the Department of Agriculture (DA) leadership to provide relevant information regarding its present and future Philippine Rural Development Projects (PRDPs) to the respective District Representatives of North Luzon to ensure cohesive team effort of all those concerned in project implementation	
	HR 1620	Rep. Savellano	Asking the Department of Finance (DOF) to continue its usual reclassification of provinces, cities and municipalities, except Quezon City and Manila which shall remain as special class cities	
	HR 1621	Rep. Savellano	Recommending to the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) to include the provinces of Pangasinan and Nueva Vizcaya in the Luzon Cluster 1 Field Operations Office (North Luzon Cluster of Regions composed of Regions 1, 2 and CAR) in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of DICT programs and services.	
Public Works and Highways jt. w/ Ways and Means	HBs 943 & 4905	Reps. Tiangco and Del Rosario	Amending Sections 2 and 3 (B) of RA 8794, otherwise known as the Motor Vehicle User's Charge (MVUC) Act of 2000, by exempting tricycles from the coverage of the road user's tax	The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Celso Lobregat (1st District, Zamboanga City), Chair of the Committee on Public Works and Highways, and Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua, Chair of the Committee on Ways and Means, agreed to

Continuation... Public Works and Highways jt. w/ Ways and Means	HB 2603	Rep. Santos-Recto	Creating the Special Mass Transit System Support Fund, amending for the purpose Sections 7 and 8 of RA 8794	<p>create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the measures.</p> <p>The Committee focused its discussion on HBs 3680, 5570 and 5804, with the respective authors manifesting that the explanatory note to the bills be registered as their sponsorship speeches.</p> <p>Road Board Project Manager Ruby Romero underscored the need to study further the provision under HB 3680, authored by Minority Leader Danilo Suarez (3rd District, Quezon), that allocates 15% of the Special Road Support Fund as contingency fund to be managed by the Road Board.</p> <p>Romero explained that allocating a substantial portion of the MVUC fund to be placed solely under the discretion of the Board and without specifying the purpose for which it can be used creates accountability issues.</p> <p>Romero also mentioned that the Board supports HB 5570, authored by Rep. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" Mariño (5th District, Batangas), which allocates a portion of the MVUC funds to cover the payment of electricity costs of street lights, traffic lights, and other road safety devices installed on national roads, saying that this will ensure a well maintained and safe road network.</p> <p>However, Director Constante Llanes of the Planning Service, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), argued that based on a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) entered into between the DPWH and the local government units (LGU), the latter will be responsible for the installation of lamp posts or streetlights on roads constructed by the DPWH, including the payment of electricity and other incidental expenses.</p> <p>Commenting on HB 5804, authored by Rep. Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte (2nd District, Camarines Sur), Romero explained that while there is a need for more funds to meet the cost for road maintenance, increasing the MVUC rates should be harmonized with the comprehensive tax reform package of the national government and should consider the impact on taxpayers.</p> <p>Rep. Lobregat and Baguio City Rep. Mark Go both agreed that the proposed increase in MVUC rates needs an in-depth study and consultation with concerned stakeholders.</p> <p>Rep. Villafuerte chided the Road Board for withholding the release of the MVUC funds to the intended beneficiaries. He called for the abolition of the Road Board and recommended that the handling of the MVUC funds be transferred to the DPWH.</p>
	HB 2605	Rep. Santos-Recto	Exempting public utility vehicles from the MVUC, amending for the purpose Sections 2 and 3 of RA 8794	
	HB 3680	Minority Leader Suarez	Reconfiguring the disposition of the monies collected and delineating the status of the special funds, amending for the purpose Sections 7 and 8 of RA 8794	
	HB 4467	Rep. Go (A.C.)	Allocating 5% of the collections from the MVUC to the Department of Education (DepEd) for the inclusion of driver's education subjects in the senior high school curriculum, amending for the purpose RA 8794	
	HB 5570	Rep. Mariño	Providing funds for the payment of energy costs of street lights, and other road and safety devices installed in national roads, amending for the purpose Section 7 of Republic Act No. 8794	
	HB 5804	Rep. Villafuerte	Amending RA 8794 by increasing the MVUC rates	
	HB 5851	Rep. Roque (H.)	Amending Section 6 of RA 8794 on the penalty for overloading	
	HR 1259	Rep. Escudero	Inquiry into the implementation RA 8794 with the end in view of enacting legislative measures to address the same	

Continuation... Public Works and Highways jt. w/ Ways and Means				<p>The Road Board was requested to submit to the Committee a list of all projects funded by the MVUC funds from 2010 up to the present, including the names of the winning contractors, and a report of the MVUC funds that are still available.</p> <p>Romero promised to submit the documents required by the Committee by February 19, 2018.</p>
Tourism	HB 4921	Rep. Pichay	Amending certain provisions of RA 9593, otherwise known as the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) to retain the whole proceeds from its travel tax collections to fund its operations and other tourism infrastructure projects in the country	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Lucy Gomez (4th District, Leyte), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to study and further refine the provisions of the bills.</p> <p>Rep. Franz "Chicoy" Alvarez (1st District, Palawan) sat as the presiding officer to allow the Committee Chair to sponsor her bill.</p>
	HB 5882	Rep. Gomez	Amending RA 9593, redirecting the TIEZA fiscal contribution to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to create a national tourism training and manpower program	<p>Rep. Gomez, author of HB 5882, highlighted the importance of tourism as an engine for poverty alleviation. As such, her bill aims to establish the National Tourism Training and Manpower Program (NTTMP) to enable Filipinos in the bottom 20% of the national economic strata to participate in the tourism industry, and raise the quality of tourism services nationwide to be at par with global standards.</p> <p>According to Rep. Gomez, pursuant to Section 72 of RA 9593, 50% of the proceeds from travel tax collections accrues to TIEZA, while 40% goes to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the remaining 10% to the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). Rep. Gomez said that CHED's 40% share should be redirected and utilized for the administration, operation and implementation of the proposed NTTMP.</p> <p>Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (1st District, Surigao del Sur), author of HB 4921, said that his bill seeks to redirect the travel tax collections, all to accrue to the TIEZA, in order to boost the agency's tourism infrastructure development program.</p> <p>Atty. Joy Bulaitan, TIEZA's Assistant Chief Operating Officer for Administration and Finance, expressed support for the two bills, explaining that the agency's share in the travel tax proceeds is not enough to fund the facilities needed by the tourism industry. She recalled that in 2017 alone, TIEZA has received requests for tourism-related projects with a total estimated cost of P14.3 billion. However, TIEZA was only given a budget of P1.4 billion.</p> <p>Meanwhile, NCCA Executive Director Rico Pableo Jr. asked that the 10% allocation for NCCA be retained so that it will be able to continue its programs relevant to the tourism industry.</p> <p>CHED OIC Prospero de Vera explained that there is no indication how much of the</p>

Continuation... Tourism				<p>Department's whole budget really comes from its 40% share in the travel tax collections. Since the funds are not delineated, he said, the CHED cannot allocate the exact amount coming from the travel tax collection specifically for the development of degrees or courses related to tourism.</p> <p>Commenting on HB 5882, Department of Tourism (DOT) Undersecretary Alma Rita Jimenez said that the DOT already provides skills training to tourism workers and suggested that the bill should focus on developing the tourism industry's manpower.</p> <p>Davao del Sur Rep. Mercedes "Didi" Cagas criticized the slow-paced project implementation of TIEZA. She suggested that connectivity projects in Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), particularly in Mindanao and Palawan, must be given priority.</p>
Transportation	HR 1649	Rep. Sarmiento (C.)	Urging the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) to present a rationalization program of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) terminals to ensure a safe, efficient, and comfortable passenger experience	<p>The Committee, chaired by Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, listened to the briefing conducted by the MIAA on the rationalization program of the NAIA terminals.</p> <p>In his resolution, Rep. Sarmiento called on the DOTr and MIAA to rationalize the operations of NAIA terminals, particularly Terminals 2 and 3, and end the "mixed use" of these terminals that resulted in congestion and inconvenience for the passengers. Terminal 2 was originally designed to accommodate domestic flights, but the design was later modified to accommodate international flights; on the other hand, Terminal 3, which is being used by both domestic and international carriers, was designed for international flights.</p> <p>Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1st District, Davao del Norte) underscored the need to decongest NAIA by redirecting flights that exceed the capacity of the airport to Clark International Airport in Pampanga. He emphasized that airline companies should accommodate passengers only up to their programmed capacity to ensure the safety, comfort and convenience of all passengers. He gave the airline companies 45 days within which to fix their operations at the NAIA or government will be constrained to cancel their franchises.</p> <p>On the complaints of Speaker Alvarez on Cebu Pacific's non-utilization of aerobridges, Rep. Sarmiento instructed the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) to investigate on the matter and submit a report as soon as possible.</p> <p>MIAA General Manager Eddie Monreal informed the Committee that the MIAA had already drafted a plan for the rationalization of the NAIA, which recommends the use of Terminals 1 and 3 for international flights and Terminals 2 and 4 for</p>

Continuation... Transportation				<p>domestic flights. Monreal added that the rationalization plan is scheduled to be implemented by May 2018.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to convene its Subcommittee on Oversight to conduct, jointly with the Committee on Legislative Franchises, an ocular visit of the NAIA to check if airline companies are complying with the directive of Speaker Alvarez.</p> <p>Explaining the closure of some runways, Monreal said that MIAA is conducting repair works to improve the runway system in the airport. He urged airline companies to rearrange their flight schedules and asked for understanding from the passengers for the inconvenience caused by such.</p>
Transportation jt. w/ Tourism	HB 2627	Rep. Atienza	Making it compulsory for all international airlines landing in the Philippines to play Philippine music immediately upon their arrival, as well as all public areas like tourist attractions, tourist buses and business establishments like hotels	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, Chair of the Committee on Transportation, and Rep. Lucy Gomez (4th District Leyte), Chair of the Committee on Tourism, will deliberate further on HB 2627 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Asked to comment on the bill, Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) Executive Director Carmelo Arcilla said there may be safety issues if the music will be played immediately upon entry to Philippine jurisdiction as this might interfere with pre-landing safety protocols.</p> <p>Department of Tourism (DOT) Assistant Secretary Reynaldo Ching expressed support for the bill as it promotes Philippine culture and heritage. He added that the DOT is amenable to the issuance of an administrative order while waiting for the passage of the bill into law as long as the issues raised by the stakeholders are threshed out.</p> <p>International airlines, namely, Etihad Airways, Emirates, and Qatar Airways expressed support for the bill, as long as the policy is in compliance with international safety protocols.</p> <p>Representatives from the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and airline companies Cebu Pacific and Philippine Airlines (PAL) likewise manifested their support for the bill.</p> <p>On the other hand, CebGo Inc. President Alexander Lao shared that not all aircraft have the technical capability to play pipe-in music.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their position papers on the bill.</p>
Ways and Means	Substitute Bill to HBs 350, 547, 3275, 4748, 5216 & 5233	Deputy Speaker Quimbo, Reps. Escudero, Roque, Alejano, Chipeco, and Speaker Alvarez	Strengthening the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) by increasing its powers and functions, and redefining, expanding and rationalizing its organization, repealing for the purpose RA 9417, RA 2327, and EO Nos. 1 and 2, series of 1986, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua, approved the tax provisions of the substitute bill.

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Government Enterprises jt. w/ Transportation and Legislative Franchises (Technical Working Group)	HB 1103	Rep. Castelo	Creating the Metro Rail Transit Regulatory Authority to oversee fare rates in public and/or private rail transit systems	<p>The technical working group (TWG), co-chaired by Baguio City Rep. Mark Go of the Committee on Government Enterprises and Rep. Sherwin Tugna (Party-List, CIBAC) of the Committee on Legislative Franchises, will deliberate further on the eight measures in its next meeting.</p> <p>It agreed to use HB 6593, authored by Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1st District, Davao del Norte), as the reference bill in consolidating the measures.</p> <p>Among the amendments to HB 6593 agreed upon in today's meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The membership of the Board of Directors of the proposed Philippine National Railway Authority (PNRA) will be increased from five to seven members, composed of one representative from the private sector and the secretaries or chairpersons of the following government agencies: Departments of Transportation (DOTr), Interior and Local Government (DILG), Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and Finance (DOF), Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), and National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA); The per diem rate of the board members will be in accordance with Memorandum Circular No. 2013-02 of the Governance Commission on Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GCG); Instead of six months to one year, the three railway corporations to be created will be given a transition period of one to two years to carry out the provisions of the proposed law ; The provisions of HBs 5458 and 1265 on the powers, duties and functions of the PNRA will be incorporated into the bill; and The provisions of HB 1265 on the duties and responsibilities of the PNRA Administrator will also be incorporated into the bill. <p>The TWG will consult the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) regarding the funding for the three railway corporations.</p>
	HB 1265	Rep. Biazon	Establishing a national railway system in the Philippines, appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 1911	Rep. Violago	Creating the Central Luzon Railways Corporation, prescribing its power, functions and duties, and providing funds therefor	
	HB 5458	Rep. Alejano	Instituting the Philippine Railway Authority (PRA)	
	HBs 6593 & 6959	Speaker Alvarez and Rep. Sy-Alvarado	Restructuring the Philippine National Railway System, creating the PRA, the Philippine Railways Corporations, appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 6837	Rep. Rodriguez (M.)	Accelerating the development of a national railway system, creating for the purpose the National Railway Authority (NRA), prescribing its powers, functions, and duties	
	HR 203	Rep. Castelo	Calling on the Department of Transportation (DOTr) to lay down the framework for the general refurbishment of the Philippine National Railways' (PNR) mass transport system	
Housing and Urban Development (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HB 1722	Rep. Biazon	Creating a Local Housing Board in all cities and first to third class municipalities, providing for its powers and functions	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon, will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>Among the agreements reached during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include in Section 3 (Definition of Terms) the definition of "adequate resettlement

Continuation... Housing and Urban Development (Technical Working Group)				<p>or relocation,” “clearinghouse,” “resettlement action plan,” and “people-led housing project;”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a representative from the Philippine Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP) and Social Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC) as members of the proposed Local Housing Board; • In Section 5 (Powers and Functions), amend paragraph (d) to read as: “Recommend the designation of sites for regular socialized housing and emergency socialized housing during disaster and conflict-induced displacement;” and • Amend the functions of the PCUP under Section 12 (Roles of Stakeholders).
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AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)	Briefing by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) on its plans, programs and accomplishments for North Luzon	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Deogracias Victor “DV” Savellano (1st District, Ilocos Sur), listened to the briefing conducted by TESDA on its 2018 plans and programs and its accomplishments for North Luzon.</p> <p>TESDA Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) Regional Director (RD) Efren Piñol said that there are still over 2,000 slots available for TESDA’s Training for Work Scholarship Program (TWSP), and 930 slots for its Special Training for Employment Program (STEP). A budget of P18.85 million and P11 million is allocated for the said programs, respectively.</p> <p>Among the policy recommendations presented by TESDA-CAR during the meeting were to include its capital outlay requirements in the budget of TESDA’s regional or provincial office and to allow the latter to purchase the materials for its training programs instead of the national government, through its centralized procurement system, to avoid delays in the training sessions.</p> <p>Meanwhile, TESDA Region I RD Francisco Jucar Jr. reported to the Committee the scholarship funds that have been allotted to Region 1: P45.93 million for TWSP; P20.5 million for STEP, and P8.44 million for the Private Education Student Financial Assistance (PESFA) programs.</p> <p>Jucar also cited TESDA Region I’s major accomplishments for the period 2013 to 2017, which include the production of 635,203 graduates out of 661,032 enrollees in TESDA courses, with 419,282 of the graduates already employed.</p> <p>As for Region II, TESDA RD Dante Navarro presented his office’s budget allocations for TWSP, STEP and PESFA which amount to P31.21 million, P7 million, and P6.63 million, respectively.</p> <p>According to Navarro, for the period 2015 to 2017, the region has produced 221,148 graduates out of 226,646 enrollees, where 45,896 are already employed.</p> <p>The target for 2018 is to have 67,304 enrollees and 60,587 graduates with 39,381 of the graduates being employed, Navarro added.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Eugene Michael de Vera (Party-List, ABS) on why the number of certified graduates is lower than the number of assessed</p>

<p>Continuation... North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>		<p>graduates, as shown in the chart presented by TESDA, Jucar answered that this is due to some courses offered by TESDA that do not issue certificates.</p> <p>Rep. De Vera countered that TESDA should require the issuance of certification to all students in its courses and programs as all local and foreign employers require such documents from their applicants.</p>
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Discussion on land issues confronting the Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA)</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, discussed the land issue confronting the Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA).</p> <p>As a backgrounder, MCIAA General Manager Steve Dicdican narrated that a certain Richard Unchuan filed a case against MCIAA, claiming ownership of the land being occupied by the Mactan-Cebu International Airport (MCIA). The Supreme Court (SC) ruled with finality in June 2016 in favor of Unchuan declaring him as the “true and legal owner” of the land in question and ordered MCIAA to pay Unchuan P2.5 billion as rental for the use of the said land.</p> <p>Dicdican lamented that MCIAA’s own in-house counsel committed lapses by admitting all the claims and arguments of Unchuan at the Regional Trial Court level. When the case was at the Supreme Court, Dicdican claimed that the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) also allegedly committed lapses by not filing on time a motion to question the ruling of the High Tribunal, which was unfavorable to the interests of the MCIAA.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Philippines AirAsia, an airline operator at the MCIA, reported that it received a “notice of garnishment” from the Court Sheriff pursuant to the ruling on the Unchuan case.</p> <p>Garnishment is the judicial process for collecting a monetary judgment allowing the winning party to take the money or property of the losing party from the person or institution that holds that property.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to invite the following personalities to shed light on the issue: Solicitor General Jose Calida, the legal team which handled the Unchuan case, and the MCIAA Board of Directors.</p>
<p>Ways and Means</p>	<p>Briefing by the Bureau of Customs (BOC) on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority program of the new Commissioner 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua, listened to the briefing conducted by the BOC.</p> <p>Newly-appointed BOC Commissioner Isidro Lapeña discussed his five-point priority program for the BOC in line with the President’s marching orders to stop corruption in the Bureau and increase revenue earnings.</p> <p>According to Lapeña, his five-point priority program aims to: 1) stop corruption; 2) increase revenue collection; 3) ensure trade facilitation; 4) strengthen anti-smuggling efforts; and 5) enhance personnel incentives, rewards system, and compensation benefits.</p> <p>Lapeña highlighted some of BOC’s policy reforms to achieve the aims of the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the “no tara, no pasalubong, no gift and no take policy” in an effort to stop corruption; • Stop the practice of benchmarking and adhere to the correct valuation and accurate assessment of duties and taxes payable on imported goods, and relieve port collectors and officials who fail to hit their collection target; • Streamline the accreditation process, abolish the command center inside the BOC, and ensure that all x-ray machines are operational 24/7 to enhance trade facilitation; • Suspend the green lane selectivity to ensure that no illegal drugs and other contraband goods will enter the Philippine ports; and • Cause the promotion of 567 deserving and qualified personnel

<p>Continuation... Ways and Means</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manner of disposition of confiscated/ forfeited imported vehicles last February 6, 2018 	<p>and open 3,000 positions for hiring, and immediately release the retirement benefits of personnel upon their separation from the service.</p> <p>For 2018, Lapeña said he intends to prioritize the full automation of the BOC and establish a Customs Academy in Subic.</p> <p>Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija) inquired on the status of investigation of BOC personnel involved in the entry of Korean waste into the country.</p> <p>Lapeña said the BOC has already filed a case with the Department of Justice (DOJ) on the matter and revoked the accreditation of the involved broker.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Raneo Abu (2nd District, Batangas) urged the BOC to address the problem of smuggling in the country having heard the comments of some members of the Committee on the matter.</p> <p>Rep. Lianda Bolilia (4th District, Batangas) urged the BOC to look into the claim of the Hong Kong government that \$5.3 billion worth of gold was imported from the Philippines from 2005 to 2015, as against the Philippine report that \$1.1 billion worth of gold was exported to Hong Kong during the same period. She said the discrepancy, which translates to \$4.2 billion (or approximately 79%), could have been smuggled out of the country.</p> <p>Rep. Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano (1st District, Ilocos Sur) inquired on the status of agricultural products, particularly garlic, that were illegally imported from China and Taiwan. Rep. Savellano lamented that the entry of these cheap imported agricultural products would be detrimental to the livelihood of the local farmers.</p> <p>Lapeña promised to look into the issues raised by the Members of the Committee and gave his assurance that the BOC is intensifying its campaign against smuggling and implementing policy reforms in the BOC.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Jose Panganiban Jr. (Party-List, ANAC-IP) on how the BOC disposes of the seized agricultural products the value of which is estimated to reach P30.2 billion, Lapeña said that these are destroyed, except for rice which is donated to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).</p> <p>BOC Deputy Commissioner Eduard James Dybuco reported that the 30 smuggled luxury vehicles – 20 in Manila, 3 in Cebu, and 7 in Davao – were simultaneously destroyed and the resulting scrap materials will be given to the “poorest scrap buyer or gatherer.” Dybuco emphasized that this move by the BOC seeks to send a strong message to the importers of these luxury vehicles to pay the correct taxes and correctly declare their imported goods.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS OWA) reminded the BOC of the proper disposition of seized goods pursuant to Chapter 4 (Seizure and Forfeiture) of RA 10863 or the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA).</p> <p>Responding to the query of Rep. Cua on the status of the other 22 luxury vehicles which are not part of the batch destroyed on February 6, Lapeña said that these luxury vehicles are still under litigation and not yet for disposal.</p> <p>The BOC was requested to submit to the Committee data on seized vehicles for the past two years which were disposed of through auction.</p>
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OTHER MATTERS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (Special Committee)	Discussion on the status of the peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front of the Philippines (CPP-NPA-NDFP)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Tawi-Tawi Rep. Ruby Sahali, discussed with the Royal Norwegian Government (RNG) the status of the peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the CPP-NPA-NDFP.</p> <p>At the outset, RNG Ambassador to the Philippines, His Excellency Erik Forner, introduced Idun Tvedt as the new special envoy to the peace process between the GRP and CPP-NPA-NDFP.</p> <p>Norway has been a third party facilitator of the peace process since 2001.</p> <p>Forner apprised the Committee that he and his team had a series of meetings with the Senate regarding the peace process and that he is scheduled to meet with President Rodrigo Roa Duterte on February 15 to convince the President to resume the peace talks with the communist rebels.</p> <p>Tvedt said that the peace process with the CPP-NPA-NDFP is currently in a "challenging" phase but she is hopeful that it will be resumed soon.</p> <p>The Philippine government terminated its peace talks with the CPP-NPA-NDFP last year following the shooting incidents involving the communist rebels.</p> <p>Upon the request of Tvedt, Rep. Sahali presented the status of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).</p> <p>Rep. Sahali said that the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC), which is composed of representatives from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and the government panel, submitted its proposed version of the BBL to Malacañang last year and the same was forwarded to Congress, which was filed as HB 6475 by Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1st District, Davao del Norte).</p> <p>HB 6475, together with HBs 92, 6121 and 6263, is currently being discussed jointly by the Committees on Local Government and on Muslim Affairs and the Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity. The bills seek to abolish the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and create in its place a new Bangsamoro Region,</p> <p>Moreover, Rep. Sahali said that the passage of the BBL will be the initial solution to the struggle of Muslims in Mindanao.</p> <p>The Committee Members present expressed their sentiments over the stalled peace talks with the CPP-NPA-NDFP and conveyed their appreciation of the RNG's effort to revive the talks.</p>

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