

Committee Daily Bulletin



17th Congress
Second Regular Session

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. II No. 87
February 21, 2018

COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agrarian Reform	HB 1719	Rep. Biazon	Institutionalizing micro-credit financing, amending for the purpose RA 3844, as amended, otherwise known as the Code of Agrarian Reform in the Philippines, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rene Relampagos (1st District, Bohol), deferred its deliberation on HB 1719 pending the submission of the official position papers from the resource persons.</p> <p>Rep. Fernando Gonzalez (3rd District, Albay) sponsored HB 1719 in behalf of the author, Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon, and manifested that the explanatory note attached to the bill be considered as his sponsorship speech.</p> <p>The bill institutionalizes micro-credit financing as part of Land Bank of the Philippines' (LBP) mandate to develop the countryside. Under the bill, LBP is authorized to grant collateral-free loans ranging from P2,000 to P20,000 not only to agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) but to private individuals or informal groups to finance self-help ventures or small-scale businesses.</p> <p>Rep. Orestes Salon (Party-List, AGRI) suggested that there should be a well-coordinated planning and implementation of the micro-financing program, including the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, for it to succeed and to ensure that it reaches its intended beneficiaries.</p> <p>Rep. Relampagos, sharing a common desire to address poverty in the rural areas, stated that the proposed micro-credit financing program be effectively communicated or made known to the intended beneficiaries explaining that access to credit has always been a problem to the marginalized sector of the society.</p> <p>Representatives from the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) and Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) expressed their support for the bill. The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, a democratic and militant movement of landless peasants and farmers, also expressed support for the bill.</p> <p>PARC Secretariat Director James Arsenio Ponce suggested that the micro-credit finance</p>

Continuation... Agrarian Reform				<p>program should have lesser requirements and lower interest rates.</p> <p>Meanwhile, representatives from the LBP, Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said that the intent of the bill is already being addressed through their various programs.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit to the Committee their respective position papers on the bill; and the concerned agencies to submit a report on the state of credit financing programs in the country.</p>
Civil Service and Professional Regulation	HBs 4749, 5330, 5812, 6403, 6480 & 6546	Reps. Alejano, Nieto, Tan (A.) Villafuerte, Antonio, and Vargas	Regulating the practice of speech language pathology in the Philippines and providing funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" Mariño (5th District, Batangas), agreed to consolidate the six bills.
	HB 3475	Rep. Escudero	Amending RA 9298, otherwise known as the Philippine Accountancy Act of 2004 (by clarifying the requirements in the practice of public accountancy)	The Committee will deliberate further on HB 3475 in its next meeting.
	HB 3565	Rep. Baguilat	Providing for a more responsive and comprehensive regulation for the practice, licensing, registration and certification of sanitary and environmental engineers and sanitarians in the Philippines, amending for the purpose RA 1364, otherwise known as the Sanitary Engineering Law	<p>The Committee agreed to consolidate HBs 3565, 4259, and 4319.</p> <p>Rep. Maximo Rodriguez Jr. (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), author of HB 4259, emphasized the need to have a specialized board that will regulate and professionalize the practice of environmental engineering in the country.</p>
	HBs 4259 & 4319	Reps. Rodriguez (M.) and Lobregat	Environmental Engineering Act of the Philippines	<p>Atty. Lovelika Bautista, Officer-in-Charge of the Secretary's Office of Professional Regulatory Boards, Professional Regulatory Commission (PRC), informed the Committee that her office has already conducted three meetings to reconcile the overlapping provisions of the three bills.</p> <p>Bautista's statement was confirmed by the representatives from the Sanitary Engineering Board and the Chemical Engineering Board of the PRC who requested to be given more time to harmonize the provisions of the three bills and come up with their recommendations.</p> <p>The PRC was requested to submit to the Committee a copy of the minutes of its meetings during which the three bills were discussed.</p>
Cooperatives Development	HR 44	Rep. Bravo	Inquiry into the establishment of an apex organization of all cooperatives as a unifying body of the cooperative movement	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rico Geron (AGAP, Party-List), will deliberate further on the issues raised relative to HR 44 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Atty. Monaliza Juarez of the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) Legal Office presented the CDA's comments on the</p>

Continuation... Cooperatives Development				<p>proposed guidelines on the creation of an apex organization of all cooperatives registered with CDA, submitted by the Philippine Cooperative Center (PCC).</p> <p>The PCC serves as a regular venue whereby national cooperative organizations arrive at common positions on various issues affecting the cooperative sector.</p> <p>Among the comments made by Juarez were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCC draft has “no regard for the organization or grouping together of federations and unions based on geo/political subdivision. Its version speaks only of sectoral representation but it does not provide the method on how the federations and unions will organize themselves to include the process of selection of who will be the representatives in the apex organization.” • The apex cooperative shall be composed of registered national cooperative unions and national federation of cooperatives. • The composition of the Board of Directors and their qualifications, and the composition of the Executive Committee need to be clarified. • The apex organization should not engage in any business activity. <p>Philippine Federation of Credit Cooperatives (PFCCO) Chairperson Gloria Futatan underscored the need to have an enabling law for the creation of an apex organization of all cooperatives. She suggested that the apex organization should submit an annual report to Congress on the status of the cooperative movement.</p> <p>Rep. Geron sees the need to conduct more consultations to ensure the sustainable operation of the proposed apex organization.</p>
Ecology	Substitute Bill to HBs 142, 540, 1528, 6596, 2964, 3610, 5901 & 4287	Reps. Acosta-Alba, Yap (V.), Gonzales (A.P.), Romero, Macapagal-Arroyo, Lanete, and De Jesus	Providing for a comprehensive hazardous and radioactive wastes management and providing penalties for violations thereof	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), approved the substitute bill to the eight bills subject to amendment.
	HRs 705 & 709	Reps. Biazon and Pineda	Inquiry into the status of initiatives being implemented by the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) and the government in general relative to the rehabilitation of Laguna de Bay	<p>The Committee terminated its inquiry relative to HRs 705 and 709. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Enrico Pineda (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), author of HR 709, inquired on the immediate plans of the LLDA to rehabilitate the Laguna Lake.</p>

Continuation...
Ecology

LLDA's Research and Development Chief Adelina Santos-Borja informed the Committee that the LLDA has convened a Watershed Management Council that will work closely with local government units (LGUs) to address the problem of deforestation and rapid conversion of lands from agricultural to industrial use and come up with a land use plan. She said that this rapid land conversion led to the establishment of many industries that discharge wastes into the Laguna Lake.

Santos-Borja added that the LLDA has conducted tree planting activities on sub-watersheds identified as prone to erosion as part of its greening program.

LLDA's Environmental Regulatory Department Manager Emitterio Hernandez likewise said that the LLDA has issued a zoning and management guidelines that limit fishery operations around the lake to 9,200 hectares from 15,000 hectares and reduce the areas for fish pen operators to 25 hectares from 50 hectares for each corporation.

Asked by Rep. Suansing to comment on the cancellation of the contract with a Belgian firm for the dredging of the Napindan Channel, which is part of the Laguna Lake Rehabilitation Project, Santos-Borja stressed that it would be better to rehabilitate the watershed first because even if the entire lake is dredged yet no appropriate measures in place to control erosion and mitigate pollution, the problem will still persist. Santos-Borja also mentioned that the LLDA was not consulted during the conceptualization phase of the Napindan dredging project.

Noting that the LLDA still has collectibles from companies that violated the Clean Water Act of 2004 (RA 9275) since 2006, Rep. Suansing suggested that these companies should not be allowed to operate within the Laguna Lake until they have paid their obligations.

Agreeing with Rep. Suansing, Aklan Rep. Carlito Marquez added that the fee for permits issued by LLDA to these industries should be increased.

LLDA's Legal Division Chief John Andrew de Guzman explained that the LLDA lacks the manpower to inspect all companies operating near or around the Lake on a regular basis, collect appropriate fines, and file the necessary case. The LLDA is only able to inspect establishments once a year instead of the ideal four times per year, De Guzman added.

Santos-Borja appealed to the Committee Members to help augment the LLDA's budget to perform its mandate effectively.

Continuation... Ecology				<p>The Committee agreed to conduct a <i>motu proprio</i> inquiry to check whether hotels and resort facilities in the country are compliant with the Clean Water Act.</p> <p>The LLDA was requested to provide the Committee with a copy of its zoning and management guidelines and its budget proposal for 2019.</p>
Government Enterprises and Privatization	HB 6198	Rep. Mercado	Establishing a government owned radio station in Maasin City, Southern Leyte	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesus Nonato Sacdalan (1st District, North Cotabato), approved HB 6198.
	HBs 59, 136, 361, 471, 1017, 1097, 1608, 1671, 1780, 1880, 2569, 3127, 3453, 4205, 4641, 4733, 4746 & 5426	Reps. Tinio, Batocabe, Zamora, Bataoil, Castelo, Cagas, Revilla, Catamco, Trefias, Rodriguez (M.), Primicias-Agabas, Villarin, Panotes, Salceda, Escudero, and Alejano	Proposing amendments to RA 8291 or the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) Act of 1997 (by lowering the retirement age of government employees, providing additional benefits to retirees, and strengthening the GSIS, among others)	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to draft a substitute bill to the 18 bills.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Antonio Tinio (Party-List, ACT TEACHERS).</p> <p>Rep. Tinio asked the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) if it has already submitted data on the actuarial study on the impact of lowering the optional retirement age of all government employees.</p> <p>GSIS Vice President for NCR Operations Nora Malubay-Saludares replied that GSIS needs to update a similar study it conducted in 2011. She promised to submit the results of GSIS' study in the next Committee meeting.</p> <p>Baguio City Rep. Mark Go asked on the computation of pension for retired government employees. Malubay-Saludares explained that GSIS calculates the pension based on the average monthly compensation of the pensioner for the last three years of employment.</p> <p>GSIS was directed to submit its actuarial study on lowering the optional retirement age of government employees which was done in 2011 and the other one being done currently (based on 2016 data).</p>
	HB 734	Rep. Escudero	Granting monthly pension to government retirees under RA 1616 who have reached the age of 70 years, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 734 in another meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Evelina Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon), author of HB 734, emphasized that government employees who reach the age of 70 years should have additional pension from GSIS.</p> <p>However, Malubay-Saludares said that GSIS is not inclined to support the bill, explaining that the formula in computing the retirement benefits under RA 1616 already requires a substantial amount compared to the formula being used under RA 8291 or the current GSIS Law.</p> <p>She went on to say that GSIS does not have a pension program designed for retirees who reach 70 years old, adding that as they retire,</p>

Continuation... Government Enterprises and Privatization				they are already given the "take all" pension under RA 1616.
	HB 1087	Rep. Lanete	Granting additional insurance benefits to all public school teachers, providing funds for the payment of its premiums	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 1087 in another meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Scott Davies Lanete, M.D. (3rd District, Masbate), author of HB 1087, said that his bill grants additional medical insurance to public school teachers so as to provide for their medical expenses in case of work-related illnesses. He also explained that this additional benefit will not entail additional premium payments from the teachers, because these will be shouldered by the government.</p> <p>Malubay-Saludares opined that giving additional benefits only to teachers may have legal implications since it may be tantamount to class legislation.</p> <p>The GSIS was directed to come up with a study on the budgetary requirement to pay for the additional premium needed to provide additional insurance benefits to all government employees.</p>
	HB 3014	Rep. Batocabe	Abolishing the Governance Commission for Government-Owned or Controlled Corporations (GCG), repealing for the purpose RA 10149, otherwise known as GOCC Government Act of 2011	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to deliberate further on the bill in another meeting.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Rodel Batocabe (Party-List, AKO BICOL).</p> <p>Reps. Batocabe and Bernadette Herrera-Dy (Party-List, BAGONG HENERASYON) said that the GCG has failed to fulfill its mandate of exercising oversight functions over government-owned or controlled corporations (GOCCs) which led to alleged abuses committed by their officers. Both also claimed that GCG has unduly deprived the rank and file employees of benefits due them.</p> <p>Director Johann Carlos Barcena of GCG explained that under Republic Act 10149, the GCG was created as a central advisory, monitoring, and oversight body with authority to formulate, implement and coordinate policies. He stressed that GCG does not interfere in the operations of the GOCCs. He also explained that the Compensation and Position Classification System (CPCS), which should have served as basis for salary adjustments of GOCC personnel was approved only in 2016 but its implementation was ordered suspended by President Rodrigo Duterte.</p> <p>The GCG was directed to submit its proposed amendments to certain provisions of RA 10149 to be discussed in the next meeting of the Committee.</p>
Labor and Employment	Substitute Bill to HBs 175, 711 & 1908	Reps. Nograles (K.A.) and Angara-Castillo	Rationalizing government interventions in labor disputes by adopting the essential services criteria in the exercise of the assumption or certification power of the	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Randolph Ting (3 rd District, Cagayan), approved the Substitute Bill to the three bills subject to style.

Continuation... Labor and Employment			Secretary of Labor and Employment, and decriminalizing violations thereof, amending for the purpose Articles 263, 264 and 272 of PD 442, as amended	
	Substitute Bill to HBs 277 & 710	Reps. Nograles (K.A.) and Angara-Castillo	Strengthening the regulation of employment of foreign nationals and transfer of technology, amending for the purpose Articles 40, 41, and 42, Title II, Book 1 of PD 442, as amended	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to the two bills subject to style.
	HB 1358	Rep. Nograles (K.A.)	Providing for the remedy of filing a petition for certiorari to the Supreme Court to review the decisions of the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC), amending for the purpose Articles 223 and 224 of PD 442, otherwise known as the Labor Code of the Philippines	<p>The Committee approved HB 1358.</p> <p>The bill seeks to simplify and speed up the disposition of labor disputes by eliminating the Court of Appeals in the process of judicial review of labor cases.</p> <p>The bill provides that “no appeal or petition from the decisions, resolutions, awards, or orders of the labor arbiter shall be entertained by any court or agency” except the NLRC.</p> <p>Furthermore, the bill states that decisions, resolutions, orders, or awards of the NLRC shall be reviewed only by the Supreme Court on petition for certiorari under the Rules of Court, solely on questions of law or jurisdiction in the exercise of its powers under Paragraph 1 Section 5, Article VIII of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.</p> <p>A petition for Certiorari is a document which a losing party files with the Supreme Court asking the latter to review the decision of a lower court.</p> <p>Commissioner Isabel Ortiguerra of the NLRC, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), expressed support for the bill.</p>
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 & 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	<p>The Joint Committee, alternately presided by Reps. Aileen Radaza (Lapu-Lapu City), Makmod Mending Jr. (Party-List, AMIN) and Divina Grace Yu (1st District, Zamboanga del Sur), will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) Vice Chair and Executive Officer Rogelio Casurao does not agree to the proposal that the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BAR) Chief Minister will be deputized as the ex-officio member of the NAPOLCOM and at the same time as ex-officio Chair of the Bangsamoro Regional Police Board, which is part of the NAPOLCOM.</p> <p>Casurao also said that the composition of the Bangsamoro Regional Police Board should be in accordance with the qualifications set forth by the NAPOLCOM.</p> <p>Rep. Celso Lobregat (1st District, Zamboanga City) questions the power of the Board to recommend people to the positions of</p>

<p><i>Continuation...</i> Local Government jt. w/ Muslim Affairs and Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity</p>				<p>Bangsamoro police regional director and his/her deputies, the provincial directors, and the city and municipal chiefs of the Bangsamoro police.</p> <p>On the proviso stating that “the relationship between the Bangsamoro Police and national support services of the PNP shall be determined by the intergovernmental relations body,” Casurao said that it may not be necessary because at present the PNP support units perform their functions and duties beyond local subdivisions.</p> <p>Director Jeanette Florita of the Office of Empowerment and Human Rights of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) expressed her support for the proposed BBL but underscored that the term “Bangsamoro” must be limited to its political identity. She also stressed that even if the BBL is ratified, RA 8371 or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 (IPRA) must remain the paramount law to protect and promote the rights of the indigenous peoples (IPs) in the BAR.</p> <p>Janna Belen of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) agreed to the proposed creation of the Bangsamoro Regional Human Rights Office (BARHRO). Belen, however, said that the “BARHRO’s coordinative and complementary relationship with the CHR” runs counter to the provision in the BBL that the BARHRO shall be under the CHR’s direct control and supervision.</p> <p>Atty. Hedjarah Mangompia-Said of the Commission on Audit (COA) agreed that the national government and the BAR should have concurrent power on auditing. However, Rep. Lobregat stressed that based on the records of the 1986 Constitutional Commission, the power to audit is exclusive to the national government.</p> <p>Representatives from the Civil Service Commission (CSC), Department of Agriculture (DA), and Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) expressed their support for the draft substitute bill.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the proposed law.</p> <p>The Joint Committee will issue a show cause order to the heads of the agencies invited for today’s hearing for their failure to attend despite due notice.</p>
<p>Natural Resources</p>	<p>Substitute Bill to HB 678</p>	<p>Rep. Eriguel</p>	<p>Reclassifying certain public lands within the strip of land five kilometers from either side of the Aspiras Highway (formerly known as Marcos Highway) from the</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Arnel Ty (Party-List, LPGMA), approved the Substitute Bill to HB 678, with amendment.</p>

Continuation... Natural Resources			Municipality of Agoo, Province of La Union to the Municipality of Tuba, Province of Benguet covered by Proclamation 1754, as alienable and disposable lands	
	Substitute Bill to HB 4116	Rep. Rocamora	Providing for the institutionalization of the Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HB 4116.
	Substitute Bill to HB 6242	Rep. Go (M.)	Granting another period to file manifestation of intention to validate titles issued under Civil Reservation Case No. 1, GLRO Record No. 211, pursuant to RA 931, as amended, and as provided under PD 1271	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HB 6242.
	HB 6505	Rep. Antonio	Instituting a new Water Code, amending for the purpose PD 1067, otherwise known as the Water Code of the Philippines	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on HB 6505.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Joseph Stephen Paduano (Party-List, ABANG LINGKOD).</p> <p>Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur), who sponsored the bill in behalf of the author, said that HB 6505 aims to update the 41-year old Water Code to catch up with the developments and changes of the current times and to have a more holistic water reform initiative.</p> <p>Engineer Luis Rongavilla of the National Water Resource Board (NWRB) expressed support for the bill, saying that it is about time to revise the decades old Water Code especially the composition of the Board.</p> <p>Also in support of the bill were representatives from the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), Forest Management Bureau (FMB), Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), and National Power Corporation (NPC).</p> <p>Meanwhile, Atty. Josella Cardenas, lawyer from Maynilad Water Services, expressed reservation on limiting the validity of water permits to 10 years. She instead suggested that water permits should have a validity period of 50 years to allow the water companies to recoup their investments and implement their long-term plans.</p> <p>The bill defines water permit as a document that grants the right to appropriate water to persons including government agencies and instrumentalities, local government units (LGUs), government-owned or controlled corporations, and quasi-public corporations.</p> <p>The various stakeholders were requested to submit their position papers on the bill.</p>

Population and Family Relations	Substitute Bill to HBs 116, 1062, 2380 & 6027	Reps. Lagman, Barbers, De Jesus, and Baguilat	Providing for absolute divorce and dissolution of marriage in the Philippines	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sol Aragones (3rd District, Laguna), approved the substitute bill subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Edcel Lagman (1st District, Albay), chair of the technical working group (TWG) that drafted the substitute bill, remains confident that the proposed law will be taken up at the Plenary before the celebration of the International Day of Women on March 8.</p>
Transportation	HBs 5 & 3071	Majority Leader Fariñas and Rep. Primicias-Agabas	Providing for stiffer penalties for persons driving under the influence of alcohol, dangerous drugs and similar substances, amending for the purpose RA 10586, otherwise known as the Anti-Drunk and Drugged Driving Act of 2013	<p>The Committee, chaired by Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, will deliberate further on the three bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>Among the amendments to the lead bill (HB 5) agreed upon in today's meeting are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In case the driver/violator/offender fails the field sobriety test, he/she shall be subjected to custodial investigation; and • Without prejudice to prosecution under the Revised Penal Code, the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, and other applicable laws, the failure on the part of the apprehending officer to detain the offender at the police station or file the appropriate complaint within a reasonable period of time, shall be punishable by removal from office or dismissal from service. <p>Land Transportation Office (LTO) Executive Director Romeo Vera Cruz expressed concern on the severity of punishment against law enforcement officers under the proposed law.</p> <p>Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City) countered that such punishment is justified in order for law enforcement officers to take their mandate seriously.</p>
	HB 5530	Rep. Romero	Accelerating the imposition of anti-drunk and drugged driving policies, providing stiffer penalties and sanctions, promoting an effective awareness program, improving existing security and safety functions	
	HB 279	Rep. Escudero	Prohibiting tricycles to ply along the national highways and providing penalties for violation thereof	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to fine-tune the bill.
	HB 6274	Rep. Fuentesbella	Establishing the National Land Transportation Authority, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to fine-tune the bills.</p> <p>Rep. Edgar Sarmiento (1st District, Samar) will act as the TWG Chair.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
	HB 6776	Speaker Alvarez	Creating the Land Transportation Authority repealing for the purpose EO 202 and EO 226, which created the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) and Land Transportation Office (LTO), respectively	
Youth and Sports Development	HB 5032	Rep. Pineda	Defining the crime of game-fixing and providing penalties therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Conrado Estrella III (Party-List, ABONO), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on HB 5032.

Continuation... Youth and Sports Development				<p>Rep. Enrico Pineda (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), author of HB 5032, said that the bill seeks to stop game-fixing in Philippine sports by increasing the penalties prescribed in PD 483, from <i>prision correccional</i> to <i>prision mayor</i>, and from a fine of P1,000 to a fine of P1 million but not exceeding P5 million.</p> <p>Games and Amusements Board (GAB) Chair Abraham Kahlil Mitra expressed support for the bill. He suggested that representatives from law enforcement agencies be invited in the next meeting to present their views on the bill.</p> <p>Sarangani Rep. Rogelio Pacquiao recommended that the bill should cover athletes in the amateur and professional sports as well.</p>
	HB 6420	Rep. Belaro	Preserving indigenous games of the Philippines	The Committee will deliberate further on HB 6420.

COMMITTEE MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
People's Participation	Discussion on the proposals of the Philippine Coalition on Volunteerism, Inc. (PhilCV) in relation to RA 9418 or the Volunteer Act of 2007	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Maria Valentina Plaza (1st District, Agusan del Sur), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to study further the proposals of PhilCV in relation to RA 9418.</p> <p>PhilCV President Mary Luz Tiongson proposed that the "Volunteer's Month" (or "Buwan ng Bayanihan") be declared in June to coincide with such activities as "Brigada Eskwela" and the commemoration of "Independence Day." She said PhilCV has observed that the "propensity for service among people peaks during this month."</p> <p><i>Brigada Eskwela</i> is a program of the Department of Education (DepEd) wherein all education stakeholders participate and contribute their time, effort, and resources to make public school facilities ready for learners' use by the opening of classes every June.</p> <p>However, Fr. Carlito Clase of the Mary Mediatrix of All Grace Foundation suggested that Volunteer's Month may be observed in May since most volunteerism activities take place in most part of the country during the celebration of local fiestas.</p> <p>On the other hand, Jhoanne Mahilum, economic development specialist at the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), said that under Proclamation No. 55 series of 1988, the "National Volunteers Month" is held in December of each year, while the United Nations declared April as the "Global Volunteerism Month."</p> <p>PhilCV also proposes that a thorough study on the volunteer sector infrastructure of other countries be made that may be emulated by the volunteer sector in the Philippines.</p> <p>Commenting on this proposal, Volunteer Organizations Information, Coordination and Exchange, Inc. (VOICE) President Timothy Gabuna pointed out that in countries like Canada and South Korea, government funding for volunteer organizations has been well established. Gabuna added that different volunteer groups in other countries have formed themselves into networks intended for nation-</p>

<p>Continuation... People's Participation</p>		<p>building, which may serve as a model for the volunteer groups in the Philippines to copy.</p> <p>Rep. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba (1st District, Bukidnon) informed the Committee that she filed HB 146 which institutionalizes volunteerism as a strategy for national development.</p> <p>Lastly, PhilCV proposes that the volunteer sector be organized using the disaster and risk reduction (DRR) framework.</p> <p>Tiongson expressed the desire of PhilCV to strengthen the partnership between its volunteers and the local government units (LGUs). She stressed that bridging the gap between the volunteers' coalition and the LGUs will effectively improve the protocol and needed services during disasters or calamities.</p>
---	--	---

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Special Committee on Bases Conversion (Technical Working Group)	HB 2391	Rep. Roman	Changing the allocation formula used in the computation of the share of the local government units (LGUs) in the 2% tax on gross income earned by all business enterprises within the Subic Special Economic Zone (SSEZ), amending for the purpose RA 7227, as amended, otherwise known as the Bases Conversion and Development Act of 1992	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Malabon City Rep. Federico "Ricky" Sandoval II, will prepare a draft substitute bill to the three bills. The Substitute Bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga), author of HB 3685, said that a portion of the proceeds of the 5% income tax being collected from the registered business enterprises inside the CFZ should be remitted to the Provincial Government of Pampanga to serve as additional funding source for the development and promotion of the CFZ including its tourism industry. She further elucidated that when the bases were converted into special economic zones, it was the provinces that spent for its promotion, job training, and creation of a one-stop shop for the locators, among others.</p> <p>SBMA Chairperson and Administrator Wilma Eisma concurred with the statement of Rep. Macapagal-Arroyo.</p> <p>On the suggestion of Rep. Victor Yap (2nd District, Tarlac), the TWG agreed that aside from the Province of Pampanga, the Province of Tarlac would be included among those that will have a share in the tax proceeds.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their comments and recommendations to be incorporated in the draft substitute bill.</p>
	HB 3685	Rep. Macapagal-Arroyo	Amending Section 15 of RA 7227, as amended [by remitting a portion of the tax collected from registered business enterprises within the Clark Freeport Zone (CFZ) to the Provincial Government of Pampanga]	
	HB 6379	Rep. Calixto-Rubiano	Amending RA 7227, as amended [by fortifying and reaffirming the powers of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) as the operating and implementing arm of the government over the Subic Bay Freeport Zone (SBFZ) and the Subic Special Economic Zone (SSEZ), and updating the composition of its board]	
Government Reorganization jt. w/ Overseas Workers Affairs (Technical Working Group)	Substitute Bill to HBs 192, 227, 288, 543, 822, 1936, 2334, 3255 & 4899	Rep. Bertiz, Deputy Speaker Singson, Reps. Romero, Arenas, Yap (A.), Villar, Cojuangco,	Creating the Department of Migration and Development, defining its powers and functions, and appropriating funds therefor	The joint technical working group (TWG), co-chaired by Rep. Ron Salo (Party-List, KABAYAN), for the Committee on Government Reorganization, and Rep. Jesulito Manalo (Party-List, ANGKLA), Chair of the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs, will deliberate further on the substitute bill in its next meeting.

Continuation... Government Reorganization jt. w/ Overseas Workers Affairs (Technical Working Group)		Aglipay-Villar, and Castelo		<p>Reps. Rose Marie "Baby" Arenas (3rd District, Pangasinan) and Aniceto "John" Bertiz III (Party-List, ACTS-OFW), authors of HBs 543 and 192, respectively, said that they filed their bills to protect and promote the rights of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and provide reintegration programs to returning OFWs.</p> <p>Representatives from government offices such as the Office of the President (OP), Department of Justice (DOJ), and National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), as well as from various OFW groups such as OFW Movement, MRRD NECC-UAE (Mayor Rodrigo Roa Duterte National Executive Coordinating Committee-United Arab Emirates), and Lumbaca Ugnayan International-United Bangsamoro Council (LUI-UBC) expressed support for the proposed law.</p> <p>On the other hand, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Institute for Labor Studies Deputy Executive Director Brena Feji opposed the bill, arguing that the creation of another department will only overlap with the functions of existing government agencies already catering to the needs of the OFWs and will also entail additional costs to the government. Feji suggested instead for the issuance of an executive order that will mandate concerned government agencies to coordinate all their efforts for the welfare of OFWs.</p>
---	--	--------------------------------	--	--

AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)	<p>Briefing by the following government agencies on programs, issues and concerns relative to the tobacco industry and tobacco farmers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Tobacco Administration (NTA) 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano (1st District, Ilocos Sur), listened to the briefing conducted by the resource persons from the National Tobacco Administration (NTA) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) on programs, issues and concerns relative to North Luzon's tobacco industry and its farmers.</p> <p>NTA Administrator Robert Seares presented the agency's programs which involve, among others, the extension of production assistance in the form of cash, fertilizers, and pesticides to tobacco farmers; construction or repair of tobacco curing barns; construction of small-scale communal irrigation systems; and dissemination of production technologies.</p> <p>Rep. Savellano asked if these programs can improve the tobacco industry in North Luzon. Seares replied in the affirmative, emphasizing that NTA's programs are designed to improve the quality and yield of tobacco, as well as the welfare of tobacco farmers. NTA Deputy Administrator for Operations Mel John Verzosa also cited the tobacco farmers' improved curing barns and better production technologies which likewise improve the quality of tobacco products in the North.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Deputy Speaker Eric Singson (2nd District, Ilocos Sur) expressed concern on the discrepancies in the data on tobacco production per municipality.</p>

<p>Continuation... North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Budget and Management (DBM) 	<p>NTA Regulation Department Officer-in-Charge Rohbert Ambros explained that such discrepancies may be due to the existence of unlicensed tobacco traders or field canvassers, also known in the industry as “cowboys,” which the NTA is unable to monitor or apprehend due to lack of personnel and police power. These cowboys purchase tobacco products directly from farmers and sell them to preferred trading centers, which also do not report such kind of transactions.</p> <p>Ambros also mentioned that the NTA has already adopted measures to improve the overall system of monitoring and documentation. However, he suggested that the local government units (LGUs) should issue ordinances or resolutions requiring field canvassers in their areas of jurisdiction to secure a license or certification first from the NTA before they can operate.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Singson added that the purchase invoice vouchers (PIVs) used in tobacco trading should also be signed by the barangay captain, the NTA municipal officer, and a representative from the municipal or city government.</p> <p>The NTA was requested to furnish the Committee a copy of its programs and activities per district.</p> <p>Members of the Committee urged the DBM to properly implement RA 7171 (the law promoting the development of farmers in the Virginia tobacco-producing provinces) and RA 8240 (the law amending Sections 138, 140 and 142 of the National Internal Revenue Code), specifically to make available the LGUs’ share in the proceeds of the tobacco excise tax so that they can utilize the funds for the promotion and development of tobacco farmers. The Members also suggested that the District Representatives’ signatures should be required by the DBM in all transactions relative to the release and utilization of the said funds.</p> <p>Director Leila Rivera of DBM’s Local Government and Regional Coordination Bureau explained that the DBM is obliged to release the funds to the beneficiary-LGU upon its submission of all the documentary requirements as prescribed in DBM’s Local Budget Memorandum.</p> <p>The Committee decided to hold an executive session to discuss further the aforementioned issue.</p>
--	---	---

JOINT CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<p>Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management System of the Philippines (COCDRRM) - House Panel</p>	<p>Briefing on the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) program of the government</p>	<p>The House panel of this Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, chaired by Rep. Amado Espino Jr. (5th District, Pangasinan), listened to the briefing conducted by the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), the implementing arm of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).</p> <p>Undersecretary Ricardo Jalad, OCD administrator and NDRRMC executive director, presented NDRRMC’s plans and programs and the corresponding outcomes and accomplishments in the areas of disaster prevention and mitigation, disaster preparedness, disaster response, and disaster rehabilitation and recovery. This is in line with the implementation of RA 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010.</p>

<p>Continuation... Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management System of the Philippines (COCDRRM) - House Panel</p>		<p>On the suggestion of Rep. Ciriaco Calalang (Party-List, KABAYAN) to further enhance the country's disaster preparedness, Jalad reiterated that information dissemination and training programs are being conducted at the community level to increase the people's disaster awareness and to equip them with necessary skills and capability to cope with the impact of disasters.</p> <p>Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6th District, Quezon City) inquired about the Local Disaster Resilience Insurance Fund (LDRIF) and if local government units (LGUs) are aware of this fund.</p> <p>Jalad answered that the Department of Finance (DOF) is still working with the World Bank in establishing an effective mechanism that will provide LGUs readily available funds after a disaster. He added that the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) will be the insurer which is why substantial capacity building is being conducted at this time</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Eric Martinez (2nd District, Valenzuela City) if there are monitoring equipment installed in all 25 active volcanoes in the country, Jalad answered that only in eight volcanoes in which the country has such equipment permanently installed.</p> <p>The OCD was requested to submit to the Committee the cost estimate of the <i>kapitbahayan</i> house, which is the model adopted by the NDRRMC in constructing post-disaster housing units said to be resistant to earthquake and strong winds, and designed by the Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development (PCIEERD) of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).</p>
---	--	---