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BICAMERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Bicameral Conference Committee	HB 6573 & SB 1662	Rep. Herrera-Dy and Senator Honasan	Amending RA 8049 to strengthen the law on hazing and regulate other forms of initiation rites of fraternities, sororities, and other organizations, providing penalties therefor	<p>The Bicameral Conference Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Reynaldo Umali (2nd District, Oriental Mindoro), Chair of the House Committee on Justice, and Senator Panfilo Lacson, Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights, approved the reconciled version of HB 6753 and SB 1662.</p> <p>Other conferees present during the bicameral conference committee meeting were the following: On the part of the House, Reps. Eric Olivarez (1st District, Parañaque City), Strike Revilla (2nd District, Cavite), Bernadette Herrera-Dy (Party-List, BAGONG HENERASYON), Alfredo Garbin Jr. (Party-List, AKO BICOL), and Vicente "Ching" Veloso (3rd District, Leyte); on the part of the Senate, Senators Gregorio Honasan II, Juan Miguel "Migz" Zubiri, Sherwin Gatchalian, Antonio "Sonny" Trillanes IV, and Joel Villanueva.</p>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Dangerous Drugs	HR 1674	Speaker Alvarez	Inquiry into the reported smuggling of illegal drugs off the coastal waters of Isabela as well as similar incidents in other parts of the country	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Robert "Ace" Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 1674 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Barbers informed the Committee of the several cases wherein illegal drugs worth hundreds of million pesos have been found off the different shorelines in the country. According to him, these incidents show a clear lack of capacity on the part of the government to secure its coastal waters from vessels sneaking drugs into the country. He added that there is a need for Congress to determine if the country is becoming a market or transshipment point for illegal drugs and for Congress and concerned agencies to come up with appropriate measures to address this matter.</p>

Continuation...
Dangerous
Drugs

During the meeting, representatives from the Philippine National Police (PNP), Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and Philippine Navy gave their respective accounts of the cases wherein illegal drugs were found off the country's eastern shorelines.

At this point, the Committee held an executive meeting to allow the resource persons to elaborate on their reports.

After the executive meeting, the resource persons were asked about their comments on the issues raised in HR 1674. They were in agreement that the illegal drugs, mostly cocaine, likely originated from South American countries and were meant to be shipped to China where the demand for cocaine is supposedly a lot larger than the demand in the Philippines.

Philippine Navy Rear Admiral Erick Kagaoan reported that vessel MV Jin Ming No. 16, which sank off Pambujan, Northern Samar on January 2, 2018 due to bad weather committed unauthorized entry into the Philippine waters by turning off its automatic identification system (AIS) - an automatic tracking system used on ships to assist a vessel's watchstanding officers and allow maritime authorities to track and monitor vessel movements.

According to Kagaoan, the captain of the ship was also found to have falsified the documents concerning the ownership of the vessel. Philippine authorities suspect that the ship must have carried the drugs found in Matnog, Sorsogon the following day. Kagaoan added that the Philippine Navy has already reported the incident to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) which will then file a diplomatic protest against its flag state.

DFA representative Gerry Santos promised to submit to the Committee a list of diplomatic protests filed in the past due to similar incidents mentioned by Kagaoan.

Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas (1st District, Ilocos Norte) asked about the custody of the illegal drugs found off the country's eastern shorelines.

Referring to the drugs seized in Matnog, PNP Region 5 Regional Director Antonio Gardiola said that the PNP has submitted a sample to the PDEA for testing while the rest are being used in the ongoing investigation.

Majority Leader Fariñas reminded the PNP of RA 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, which vests in the PDEA the sole custody and authority to dispose of

Continuation... Dangerous Drugs				<p>confiscated, seized, and/or surrendered illegal drugs. He warned the PNP that any improper handling and processing of evidence could result to a failure in the prosecution of drug cases.</p> <p>Rep. Leopoldo Bataoil (2nd District, Pangasinan) advised the various government agencies to work closely with local government units so that the country's anti-drug campaign would reach the grassroots level.</p> <p>Recognizing the need to strengthen the PCG and Philippine Navy, the Committee requested from them a list of equipment or any form of assistance that they need from Congress to improve their services, especially in ensuring the security along the country's coastlines.</p>
	HR 456 and Privilege Speech Nos. 84 and 88	Rep. Jalosjos	Investigation into the illegal drug trading activities in the Province of Zamboanga del Norte	The Committee deferred the approval of the Committee Report on HR 456 and Privilege Speech Nos. 84 and 88 because of the additional information gathered with regard to the cases filed against some personalities mentioned in the measures.
Games	HR 546	Minority Leader Suarez	Investigation into the proliferation of illegal gambling	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Gus Tambunting (2nd District, Parañaque City), will continue its inquiry into the issues raised in the five resolutions in its next meeting.
	HRs 712, 715 & 1445	Reps. Manalo, Batocabe, and Villafuerte	Inquiry into the alleged irregularities, abuses and failure of the Small Town Lottery (STL) operations of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) in generating its projected income resulting in the loss of billions of pesos in revenues on the part of the national government and the possible use of STL operations as fronts for <i>jueteng</i> and other illegal numbers games in the country	To address the various concerns relative to STL operations, PCSO Chair Anselmo Simeon Pinili informed the Committee that the PCSO Board has amended the existing STL implementing rules and regulations (IRR), which is now pending approval by the President of the Philippines.
	HR 1579	Rep. Panganiban	Inquiry into the irregularities of the PCSO regarding the operation of the STL, awarding of authorized agency corporation (AAC), and shortfall in the collection of STL revenues accruing to the government	<p>Rep. Tambunting remarked that penalties against erring AACs should be included in the revised IRR.</p> <p>Rep. Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte Jr. (2nd District, Camarines Sur) told the PCSO to fix its system of STL revenue computation to prevent further losses on the part of the government. He also inquired about Evenchance Gaming Corporation which allegedly violated the Anti-Dummy Law and its revenue shortfall amounting to half a billion pesos.</p> <p>PCSO Board Member Jesus Manuel Suntay said the case involving Evenchance will be forwarded to the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) for review. As for the revenue shortfalls of Evenchance, PCSO Assistant General Manager Remeliza Gabuyo said possible legal actions may be taken against it if it does not deliver.</p> <p>Similarly, Rep. Jose Panganiban Jr. (Party-List, ANAC-IP) questioned the legality of the</p>

Continuation... Games				<p>operations of Speed Games while Rep. Amado Espino Jr. (5th District, Pangasinan) presented evidence on Speed Games president Edward Aguilar's alleged violation of the Anti-Dummy Law where he stood as dummy to a certain Ruben Reyes and Even Reyes.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Panganiban, Suntay clarified that PCSO cannot terminate or cancel the license of erring AACs all at the same time as it would result in even bigger losses on the part of the government given that it takes at least three months to replace one AAC.</p> <p>The PCSO was requested to submit the following documents to the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the legal opinion allowing PCSO to charge the documentary stamp tax payments against its Charity Fund; • Copy of the STL's IRR as amended by the PCSO Board; • List of AACs and their respective remittances and shortfalls; • List of AACs remitting more than the presumptive monthly retail receipts (PMMR); • Documents, if any, proving that Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" Teves Jr. (3rd District, Negros Oriental) is an STL operator, as claimed by PCSO Board Member Sandra Cam. <p>In the next meeting, the Committee will invite Ruben Reyes and Even Reyes of Speed Games to explain their side on the issue hurled against them.</p>
Globalization and WTO (Special Committee)	HRs 796 & 797	Rep. Casilao	Inquiry into the effects on the local livestock, poultry, and vegetable industries of the implementation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade - World Trade Organization's (GATT-WTO) policies and programs in the country	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rodante Marcoleta (Party-List, SAGIP), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HRs 796 and 797 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Department of Agriculture (DA) Undersecretaries Evelyn Laviña and Ariel Cayanan informed the Committee that the DA's trade and tariff policies on agricultural products, including vegetables, poultry and swine, conform to the country's commitments to the WTO.</p> <p>According to Laviña and Cayanan, pursuant to RA 8178, or the Agricultural Tariffication Act of 1996, the quantitative restrictions (QR) on imported agricultural products have been replaced with tariffs, except for rice. But with the expiration of the WTO special treatment on rice last June 2017, Congress has to amend RA 8178 to allow the tariffication of rice.</p> <p>Both claimed that the current minimum access volume (MAV) mechanism which has lower tariff rates resulted in the influx of low-priced</p>

<p>Continuation... Globalization and WTO (Special Committee)</p>				<p>imported agricultural products that unduly affected the country's agricultural industry.</p> <p>Nonetheless, the DA officials said that the country may implement trade remedies allowed under the WTO agreement on agriculture, such as the special safeguard mechanism, wherein higher duties are imposed if there are import surges, and sanitary and phytosanitary measures, wherein the country may restrict the entry of imported goods to ensure that food is safe for human consumption and to prevent the spread of pests and diseases among animals and plants.</p> <p>Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) Chairperson Danilo Ramos and Chairman Emeritus Rafael Mariano called for the country's withdrawal from the WTO agreement on agriculture and asked the government to instead subsidize and support the development of the country's agriculture.</p> <p>Rep. Ariel "Ka Ayik" Casilao (Party-List, ANAKPAWIS) maintained that the government should revisit its policy on total liberalization, especially in the agriculture sector, citing the adverse effects of globalization on the sector. Rep. Casilao stressed that the Philippine government should put in place mechanisms that will protect and support the local agricultural industry.</p> <p>The stakeholders were requested to submit their respective position papers on the two resolutions.</p>
<p>Good Government and Public Accountability</p>	<p>HR 1126</p>	<p>Rep. Casilao</p>	<p>Inquiry into the utilization of the tobacco excise tax and determination of the tangible benefits acquired by tobacco farmers of Ilocos Norte</p>	<p>The Committee chaired by Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur) will continue its inquiry relative to the issues raised in HR 1126 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Several House Members expressed dismay over the Commission on Audit's (COA) deliberate inaction on the questionable utilization by the Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte (PGIN) of its share from the proceeds of the tobacco excise tax in violation of Republic Act 7171. They questioned the manner by which PGIN resorted to cash advances in almost all of its transactions which is prohibited under the law.</p> <p>The Committee Members underscored the need to review RA 7171, the law promoting the development of the farmers in the Virginia tobacco producing provinces. The law provides that funds from the excise tax proceeds shall be used for cooperative, livelihood, agro-industrial, and infrastructure projects for the benefit of the tobacco farmers. Rep. Ariel "Ka Ayik" Casilao (Party-List, ANAKPAWIS), author of HR 1126, inquired about the P294.3 million worth of cash</p>

Continuation...
Good
Government
and Public
Accountability

advances from the tobacco excise tax from 2010 up to 2013 that were used by the PGIN as payment for several purchases of agricultural products and construction materials and equipment, among others, to specific suppliers. Rep. Casilao stressed that cash advances are only allowed on specific expenses, such as payment of salaries, wages and other allowances, and travel expenditures pursuant to the COA Circular 97-002 issued on February 10, 1997, and that the purchase of agricultural products and construction materials should undergo public bidding.

Citing some transactions that were paid through cash advances by the PGIN, Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas (1st District, Ilocos Norte) inquired as to how the COA auditors failed to conduct pre-audit on these transactions as required under COA Circular 2009-002 (reinstating selective pre-audit on government transactions, including cash advances). The Majority Leader also questioned the Local Finance Committee for recommending cash advance as the mode of payment for the PGIN's questioned purchases, explaining that such function is not within its purview under the Local Government Code (RA 7160). He also stated that payment should have been made in checks considering the huge amount involved.

Ilocos Norte Governor Imee Marcos maintained that all purchases being questioned were made pursuant to the provisions of RA 7171, taking into consideration the welfare and well-being of the farmers. She also asserted that all cash advances made by the PGIN were in accordance with Section 4 (Fundamental Principles) of PD 1445 which governs the financial transactions and operations of government agencies.

The Members of the Committee chided Rizalino Franco, former supervising auditor of COA Regional Office 1, for being remiss in his duty, even as he claimed that no adverse findings were reported by his audit team on the past transactions made by the PGIN. They agreed to invite the members of the audit team that examined the said transactions in the next meeting of the Committee.

Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT TEACHERS) opined that there were lapses committed by the National Tobacco Administration (NTA) in safeguarding the rights of farmers relative to the utilization of the tobacco funds.

NTA Deputy Administrator for Operations Mel John Verzosa explained that the mandate of the NTA pursuant to RA 7171 is to certify the

<p>Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability</p>				<p>volume of tobacco production that the provinces produce and not to ensure the correct utilization of the funds nor to investigate on its alleged misuse. Verzosa, however, said that there had been proposals to revisit the law, particularly on the management of the tobacco funds.</p> <p>Asked by Rep. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA) whether the general well-being of the tobacco farmers has improved relative to the utilization of the tobacco funds by the PGIN, farmers Regino Capuyong and Tony Pugyao, representatives of the Solidarity of Peasants Against Exploitation and Alyansa Dagiti Mannalon ti Ilocos Norte or AMIN, respectively, replied in the negative.</p> <p>COA Region 1 OIC-Regional Director Michael Bacani disclosed that there is an ongoing fraud audit investigation by the COA Central Office on all transactions involving the utilization by the PGIN of its share from the proceeds of the tobacco excise tax from 2010 up to 2016. COA was requested to provide the Committee with a copy of the report as soon as the investigation is completed.</p>
	<p><i>Motu proprio inquiry</i></p>		<p>Inquiry into the transactions of the PGIN, particularly on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of portrait bust sculpture and services for the development of Paoay Museum on July 17, 2012; • Materials and installation of precast concrete for Paseo de Paoay on July 18, 2012; • Purchase of medicines and Libspray 211 for distribution to the different municipalities on October 24, 2012; • Purchase of Panlaban 5EC for distribution to the different municipalities on November 23, 2012; and • Purchase of medicines for distribution to the different municipalities on December 11, 2012 	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the alleged irregular transactions of the PGIN undertaken in 2012 in another meeting.</p> <p>Majority Leader Fariñas inquired on the process by which PGIN acquired the services of the <i>House of Precast</i> for the installation of precast concrete for the Paseo de Paoay, a heritage and cultural facility in Ilocos Norte.</p> <p>Atty. Michelle Galan, owner of the House of Precast, said that PGIN engaged the company's services and expertise to provide the Paseo's architectural design and for the installation of precast concrete. Galan confirmed that the project cost P4.8 million and took six to seven months to complete.</p> <p>Majority Leader Fariñas, however, refuted Galan's claims based on the documents he has. He said that the transaction was hastily made, noting that the purchase request was filed July 9, 2012, the purchase order was dated July 17, 2012, and the acceptance and inspection report was made a day after. Clearly, the Majority Leader said, these documents prove that Galan's claim that the project took six to seven months to complete was false.</p> <p>Responding to the query of Rep. Eugene Michael de Vera (Party-List, ABS), Galan said the House of Precast is the exclusive distributor of this highly decorative and ornamental precast, citing the retrofitting of the Manila Cathedral as one of their major business accomplishments.</p>

Government Reorganization jt. w/ Public Works and Highways	Substitute Bill to HBs 6236, 3278, 3855, 4466, 5683 & 2394	Majority Leader Fariñas, Reps. Ocampo, Bravo, Siquian Go, Tan (A.), and Zarate	Abolishing the Road Board and providing for the distribution of the motor vehicle user's charge collections, amending for the purpose RA 8794, or the law imposing a Motor Vehicle User's Charge (MVUC) on owners of all types of motor vehicles	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo, Chair of the Committee on Government Reorganization, and Rep. Celso Lobregat (1st District, Zamboanga City), Chair of the Committee on Public Works and Highways, approved the Substitute Bill to the six bills and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Reps. Lobregat and Anthony Bravo Ph.D. (Party-List, COOP-NATCCO), author of HB 3855, asked the Road Board to accomplish its pending projects until its abolition. Rep. Lobregat added that he will file a resolution on the matter.</p>
Health	Substitute Bill to HBs 268, 716, 897, 1578, 1851, 1964, 2579, 2798, 3089, 3365, 3441, 3497, 3500, 4707, 5378, 5387, 5763, 6153, 6210, 6280 & 6299, HR 786, and Privilege Speech 195	Reps. Roman, Vargas, Tan (A.), Suansing (E.), Rodriguez (M.), Aragonas, Castelo, Escudero, Alejano, Bolilia, Gatchalian, Nograles (K.A.), Roa-Puno, Herrera-Dy, and Lanete	Institutionalizing a national integrated cancer control program and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4th District, Quezon), approved the substitute bill and the corresponding Committee Report, subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Upon the recommendation of Rep. Sandra Young Eriguel, M.D. (2nd District, La Union), the Committee agreed to amend Section 18 (Cancer Assistance Fund) of the substitute bill by mandating the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) and Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) to allocate 10% of their fund for medical assistance to the proposed Cancer Assistance Fund which will be used to provide financial assistance to cancer patients.</p>
	HB 2012	Rep. Deloso-Montalla	Converting the Ramon Magsaysay Provincial Hospital in the Municipality of Iba, Zambales into the Ramon Magsaysay Regional Medical Center, upgrading and modernizing its facilities, defining its power and functions, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the bill subject to style and amendment.
	HBs 2032, 4520 & 7142	Reps. Marcos, Barbers, and Papandayan	Increasing the bed capacity of certain hospitals in the Provinces of Ilocos Norte, Surigao del Norte, and Lanao del Sur, upgrading their services and facilities and professional health care, authorizing the increase of their medical personnel, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the three bills subject to style and amendment.
	HB 3339	Rep. Suansing (E.)	Providing for the establishment of the Farmers' Medical Center (FMC) to be located in the Municipality of Zaragoza, Province of Nueva Ecija, defining its powers and functions, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the bill subject to style and amendment.
	HB 6606	Rep. Matugas	Converting the Siargao District Hospital in the Province of Surigao del Norte into a level three general hospital to be known as the Siargao Islands Medical Center	The Committee approved the bill subject to style and amendment.
	HBs 254, 255, 291, 608, 882,	Reps. Roque (H.), Abayon, Eriguel, Lopez	Strengthening the human organ and tissue donation and transplantation program, providing penalties for violation thereof	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on the eight bills.

Continuation... Health	1335, 1414 & 2326	(B.), Lanete, Salo, and Relampagos		<p>Rep. Eriquel, author of HB 608, said that her bill seeks to strengthen and enhance the existing Organ Donation Program of the country by establishing regulatory measures on organ donation but at the same time providing incentives to encourage more potential donors to participate in the program.</p> <p>Former Department of Health (DOH) Secretary Enrique Ona, currently the president of Maria Corazon Torres-Javier Foundation, expressed support for the bill and made some recommendations to further improve the proposed law.</p> <p>Representatives from the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) and Philippine Society of Nephrology likewise expressed support for the bills.</p>
Housing and Urban Development	Substitute Bill to HB 83	Rep. Benitez	Constituting an Administrative Capital City Planning Commission for the purpose of studying the feasibility of relocating the administrative capital and seat of government of the Philippines and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Alfredo "Albee" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental), approved the Substitute Bill to HB 83.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 228, 1724 & 2125	Deputy Speaker Singson, Reps. Biazon and Ocampo	Prescribing the mechanisms to facilitate the disposition of idle government-owned lands for socialized housing	<p>The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to the three bills.</p> <p>Commission on Audit (COA) State Auditor Mohammad Muariff Balang informed the Committee that the total area of government idle lands is estimated at 9,510 hectares (ha), with 3,000 ha for disposal. However, such figure is still subject to change upon further reconciliation of data with other government agencies, Balang said.</p>
	HR 1511	Rep. Benitez	Urging the National Housing Authority (NHA) to grant amnesty on all penalties and surcharges in unpaid loan amortizations and institute a loan restructuring program for beneficiaries of its socialized housing projects pursuant to RA 9507, or the law establishing a socialized and low-cost housing loan restructuring and condonation program, providing mechanisms therefor	The Committee approved the Committee Report on HR 1511 subject to style and amendment.
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, 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.</p> <p>Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III and National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Undersecretary</p>

<p>Continuation... Local Government jt. w/ Muslim Affairs and Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity</p>				<p>Adoracion Navarro emphasized that the funding provision of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) should be “programmatic, transparent, performance-based, and phased.”</p> <p>Dominguez also suggested that the proposed law should be carefully crafted to ensure an effective and efficient utilization of funds that will conform to the criteria of modern governance.</p> <p>Director Johann Carlos Barcena of the Corporate Governance Office, Governance Commission for Government-Owned or Controlled Corporations (GCG), said that the exclusive power of the proposed Bangsamoro Autonomous Region Government (BARG) over the establishment of GOCCs should be in accordance with Republic Act 10149 or the GOCC Governance Act of 2011.</p> <p>Likewise, Undersecretary Tina Rose Marie Canda of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) said that the creation of BARG offices should conform to the national government policies and guidelines.</p> <p>On what to do with the unspent amount from the proposed annual block grant, Canda explained that if BARG is treated as a national government agency, like in the case of the ARMM, the unspent amount shall revert to the national coffers. However, if the proposed BARG is categorized as a local government unit (LGU), the unspent amount shall revert to the Bangsamoro general fund for re-appropriation. Hence, she suggested that the proposed law should clearly classify the proposed BARG.</p> <p>Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) Commissioner Jose Lorena averred that the proposed BARG is classified as a regional government similar to LGUs.</p> <p>Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Deputy Commissioner Marissa Cabrerros suggested that the draft substitute bill should clearly state the national government’s reserve power to impose and collect future national internal revenue taxes not otherwise collected by the BARG.</p> <p>On the other hand, Rep. Wilter "Sharky" Wee Palma II (1st District, Zamboanga Sibugay) opined that the provision in the proposed BBL allowing BARG to impose and collect the capital gains tax, documentary stamp tax, donor’s tax, and estate tax would essentially amend the existing National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC).</p> <p>On the BARG’s exclusive power over barter trade and countertrade with member-countries</p>
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Continuation... Local Government jt. w/ Muslim Affairs and Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity				<p>of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Dominguez said that it may be allowed as long as the national government gets the 12% value-added tax (VAT) out of these transactions.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Celso Lobregat (1st District, Zamboanga City) presented to the Joint Committee the records of the 1986 Constitutional Commission indicating that the banking system should be an exclusive power of the national government.</p>
Natural Resources	HB 2739 in consolidation with HB 7077	Reps. Marquez and Alejano	Establishing a mechanism for the sustainable development and use of the Island of Boracay, Municipality of Malay, Province of Aklan, defining for the purpose the mode of acquisition for certain parcels of its public domain classified as agricultural land open to disposition under Proclamation No. 1064 and providing environmental safeguards therefor	<p>The Committee, presided by Rep. Rodel Batocabe (Party-List, AKO BICOL), approved HB 2739 in consolidation with HB 7077 subject to amendment.</p> <p>Aklan Rep. Carlito Marquez, author of HB 2739, said that a bill with similar subject matter was approved on third reading during the past three Congresses.</p> <p>Rep. Marquez emphasized that the proposed law will correct the flaws of Proclamation 1064 and exempt Boracay from existing laws deemed unsuitable for the island and institute a system for its sustainable use and development.</p> <p>Malay, Aklan Mayor Ceciron Cawaling expressed support for the bill, saying that this will resolve the issue of land ownership in Boracay.</p>
	HB 6320	Rep. Barbers	Declaring as agricultural land certain parcels of land of the public domain situated within the City of Surigao, Province of Surigao del Norte	<p>The Committee approved HB 6320 subject to amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Orestes Salon (Party-List, AGRI), who sponsored HB 6320 in behalf of the author, Rep. Robert "Ace" Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte), manifested that the explanatory note to the bill be registered as his sponsorship speech.</p> <p>Representatives from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region XIII and the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) expressed support for the bill.</p>
	HB 6727	Rep. Cuaresma	Declaring the Province of Nueva Vizcaya a mining free zone and providing penalties therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 6727.</p> <p>Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma, author of HB 6727, emphasized that her bill seeks to put an end to mining projects in her province, citing the negative effects they bring.</p> <p>Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya Vice Mayor Romeo Tayaban manifested his support for the bill as he expressed his sentiments over the harmful effects of mining activities in Kasibu which are detrimental to the rights of the people in the area.</p>

Population and Family Relations	Substitute Bill to HBs 886, 2157, 2653, 2775, 3934, 5038, 6454 & 6937	Reps. Tan (A.), Pineda, Campos, Gonzaga, Zarate, Batocabe, Castelo, and Olivarez	Providing universal social pension to senior citizens, further amending RA 7432, as amended by RA 9994, otherwise known as the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sol Aragonés (3rd District, Laguna), approved the Substitute Bill to the eight bills subject to style and amendment, and its corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Among the amendments to the substitute bill agreed upon in today's meeting are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redefine "indigent senior citizen" as any elderly who is without pension or permanent source of income/compensation to support his or her basic needs; • Increase the monthly stipend to 1,000 pesos for senior citizens receiving a monthly pension below 3,500 pesos; and • Include a provision allowing the pension of a senior citizen who waived his or her right to receive such pension to be donated to the Office of the Senior Citizen's Affairs (OSCA) located in the latter's municipality.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 865, 2989, 4708, 4980, 6268, 6594, 6697 & 6891	Reps. Yap (V.), Gatchalian, Antonino, Batocabe, Olivarez, Nieto, Panotes, and Aquino-Magsaysay	Protecting senior citizen from violence, defining elder abuse, and prescribing penalties therefor	<p>The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to the eight bills, subject to style and amendment, and its corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Rep. Victor Yap (2nd District, Tarlac), principal author of the bill, agreed to furnish the Committee statistical data on the rate of elderly abuse and the crimes committed against them at the barangay level as well as national data coming from the Philippine National Police (PNP).</p>
Public Information	HB 6811	Rep. Rodriguez (M.)	Requiring movie, television, and radio producers, including promotion and advertising agencies, and other like entities, employing unemancipated minors to deposit their talent fees or income in a trust fund, imposing penalties for violation thereof	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Scott Davies Lanete, M.D. (3rd District, Masbate), approved HB 6811.
	HB 2404	Rep. Gomez	Creating the National Film Archive to be managed by the Film Development Council of the Philippines and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to study further HB 2404.</p> <p>Rep. Maximo Rodriguez Jr. (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), who sponsored HB 2404 in behalf of the author Rep. Lucy Gomez (4th District, Leyte), said that the bill is premised on the hope that some copies of "lost" Filipino film classics may still be traced, acquired, and preserved for the benefit of the present and future generations.</p> <p>Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) Chair Mary Liza Diño-Seguerra requested for additional funds for the preservation and restoration of Filipino film classics and a permanent facility that will house the collections.</p>

Continuation... Public Information				<p>Atty. Avvy Crystabelle Alba of the Organization, Position Classification and Compensation Bureau, Department of Budget and Management (DBM), said that the DBM does not favor the bill, explaining that the National Archives of the Philippines already functions as the office that preserves primary sources of information on Philippine history and cultural heritage.</p> <p>The Committee requested FDCP to submit its proposed budget for film preservation.</p>
	HB 6826	Rep. Rodriguez (M.)	Providing for a Magna Carta for journalists	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 6826 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Rodriguez said that the bill seeks to promote the welfare and protect the rights of journalists in the country.</p> <p>Rep. Lanete added that the bill intends to professionalize the practice of journalism and establish a system of accreditation and better standards for journalism.</p> <p>Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Assistant Secretary Ana Maria Paz Banaag objected to the proposed accreditation of journalists wherein they are required to pass an examination to be administered by the proposed Philippine Council for Journalists. But if ever such an examination will be required, Banaag, said, the body that should administer it should be the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and not the journalists themselves.</p> <p>KBP Executive Director Reynaldo Hulog suggested that radio, print, and broadcast media should each be governed by individual regulatory bodies.</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, will deliberate further on HR 1649 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Alexander Lao, president and chief executive officer of Cebgo, Inc. (a subsidiary of Cebu Pacific, Inc.), admitted that Cebu Pacific has not yet refunded its passengers the amount of P250 million representing terminal fees collected since the start of the company's operations due to either cancelled flights or flights not flown.</p> <p>Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1st District, Davao del Norte) warned that these unrefunded terminal fees may be a subject of plunder case against airline companies if such funds remain in their accounts and not remitted to the MIAA.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" Teves Jr. (3rd District, Negros Oriental) how this can be refunded, Lao said that airline passengers should file their claim with the airline company.</p>

Continuation... Transportation				<p>Meanwhile, Speaker Alvarez agreed to extend the 45-day deadline he earlier gave for the implementation of the NAIA rationalization program to six months starting March 1, 2018 upon the request of MIAA General Manager Eddie Monreal. The Committee supported the move of the Speaker, saying that the six-month extension is realistic and achievable.</p> <p>Rep. Jericho Jonas Nograles (Party-List, PBA) underscored the need to include the expansion of NAIA's runways and taxiways in the rationalization program. He averred that the right of government to eminent domain be exercised in this regard, referring to the expropriation of private properties that may be needed in the expansion of the airport.</p> <p>The Committee directed the inclusion of Clark International Airport Corporation (CIAC) as member of the recently-formed MIAA-led Operational Readiness and Airport Transfer (ORAT) Program team. According to Monreal, the ORAT was formed to handle the reassignment of airline companies in the NAIA terminals based on the rationalization program.</p> <p>The MIAA was requested to submit the timeline for the six-month rationalization program for NAIA Terminals 1 to 4, as well as other documents required by the Members of the Committee.</p> <p>The airline companies were requested to submit a report on the amount of terminal fees collected and remitted to MIAA, as well as those unclaimed and unrefunded which are under their fiduciary accounts.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Information and Communications Technology (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 2873, 5195, 5765, & 7148	Reps. Yap (V.), Velasco, Gatchalian, and Vargas	Requiring public telecommunications entities (PTE) to provide nationwide mobile number portability (MNP) to subscribers	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Committee Secretary Ranier Alvarado, terminated its deliberation on the draft Substitute Bill. The Substitute Bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>Alvarado informed the members of the TWG that the Senate has already approved on third reading Senate Bill 1636, which has a subject matter similar to the substitute bill under deliberation by the TWG.</p>
Public Works and Highways jt. w/ Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)	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, otherwise known as the Motor Vehicle User's Charge (MVUC) Act of 2000	The joint technical working group (TWG), co-presided by Rep. Celso Lobregat (1 st District, Zamboanga City) of the Committee on Public Works and Highways and Rep. Evelina Escudero (1 st District, Sorsogon) of the Committee on Ways and Means, will deliberate further on HBs 5570 and 5804 in its next meeting.

Continuation... Public Works and Highways jt. w/ Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)	HB 5804	Rep. Villafuerte	Amending RA 8794 (increasing the MVUC rates)	<p>The TWG agreed to delete Section 7 of HB 5804 since it is also included in the recently approved Substitute Bill abolishing the Road Board during the meeting of the Joint Committee on Government Reorganization and Public Works and Highways.</p> <p>Section 7 of HB 5804 proposes to amend the provision in RA 8794 on the disposition of monies collected from the MVUC.</p> <p>The joint TWG also agreed to invite the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to shed light on some provisions of HB 5570.</p> <p>The Department of Finance (DOF), Land Transportation Office (LTO), and Department of Transportation (DOTr) were requested to submit their position papers for consideration by the joint TWG in its next meeting on March 14.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Housing and Urban Development (Technical Working Group)	Update on the status of implementation of Proclamation No. 458, Series of 1994, reserving for socialized housing development certain parcels of land situated along the Manggahan Floodway in the Municipalities of Cainta and Taytay, Province of Rizal, and the City of Pasig, transferring to the National Housing Authority (NHA) the ownership of said government lands and declaring the same open for disposition in favor of qualified beneficiaries	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6th District, Quezon City), discussed with concerned government agencies the status of implementation of the Manggahan socialized housing program in certain municipalities.</p> <p>As per Proclamation 458, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through the Lands Management Bureau (LMB), is directed to undertake immediately the necessary surveys and issue a special patent in favor of the NHA to facilitate the development and subsequent disposition of the subject land to the beneficiaries.</p> <p>Rep. Belmonte asked why up to now the distribution of land titles to the Manggahan Floodway beneficiaries has not yet been accomplished. According to Taytay Mayor Joric Gacula, there are 15,000 beneficiary-families in the area.</p> <p>NHA East Sector II Division Manager Ma. Theresa Siat explained that the cause of delay was the rejection by the Land Registration Authority (LRA) of NHA's application for land registration due to the alleged existence of a creek within the subject land. Siat stressed that there is no creek in the lands being applied for registration, adding that it was already diverted long before to another place.</p> <p>Rep. Alfredo "Albee" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental) requested the LRA to check its database once more or inspect the area to validate if indeed a creek is within the said land.</p> <p>On Siat's report that NHA will use its 1996 master list of qualified beneficiaries for the Manggahan socialized housing project, Manggahan Floodway Federation President Vicente Marcos requested the NHA to use the census in 2005 explaining that it was the period when Manggahan bloomed into a full-grown community.</p> <p>Rep. Benitez recommended that the 1996 NHA master list be revalidated by the local government units (LGUs).</p> <p>A TWG, to be led by the LGU of Taytay, Rizal in collaboration with Manila</p>

Continuation... Housing and Urban Development (Technical Working Group)		Water Company, Inc., will be created to address issues pertaining to waste management, including the identification of sites for sewerage treatment plants in the Manggahan Floodway area. The NHA was requested to submit to the TWG its 1996 master list of beneficiaries for the Manggahan socialized housing program.
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AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Housing and Urban Development	Briefing by the Department of Transportation (DOTr) on the North-South Railway Project	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Alfredo "Albee" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental), listened to the briefing of the DOTr on the North-South Railway Project and the resettlement of affected informal settler families (ISF).</p> <p>DOTr representative Gwen Enciso reported that the North-South railway project is comprised of two components. The first is the 653 km (478 km main line and 175km extensions) long-haul passenger rail line from Tutuban in Manila to Legazpi City in Bicol, with possible extensions from Calamba, Laguna to Batangas City (58 km), and from Legazpi City to Matnog, Sorsogon (117 km). The Philippine Government had sought financial assistance from China under a financing scheme being offered by the Export-Import Bank of China to fund of this project.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the second component includes a 68.5 km commuter rail line for the Tondo, Manila to Calamba, Laguna route. The government and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed a \$1.99 billion loan agreement for the construction of this rail project.</p> <p>For the relocation and resettlement of informal settler families (ISFs) affected by the implementation of the railway projects, the DOTr will coordinate closely with key agencies such as the Social Housing Financing Corporation (SHFC), National Housing Authority (NHA), and the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP), to provide assistance in identifying and validating ISF families as well as in preparing and implementing the resettlement action plan.</p>
	Discussion of the government socialized housing programs, particularly the affordability of the housing packages and the capacity of the beneficiaries to pay	<p>The Committee discussed with concerned government agencies the socialized housing program of the government.</p> <p>Director Zacarias Abanez of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) explained that the capacity of housing beneficiaries to pay is based on their average monthly income. For example, he said, a beneficiary with an average income of below P15,000 per month can afford a monthly amortization of P1,200 for a housing unit. On the other hand, a beneficiary with an income of above P15,000 per month can afford a monthly amortization of P2,400.</p> <p>Legal Counsel Gerwin Panghulan of the Socialized Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC) disclosed that there is not enough socialized housing projects to meet the demand since real estate developers find such projects not viable considering the high cost of land acquisition and development. The industry is producing only 180,000 to 200,000 housing units per year as against the demand of 900,000 housing units per year, Panghulan stressed.</p> <p>Rep. Benitez urged the government housing agencies to provide more lands for socialized housing projects to address the housing backlog. However, he proposed in-city relocation so that ISFs would have easy access to livelihood and basic services.</p>

<p>North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>	<p>Briefing by the Department of Tourism (DOT) on its plans and programs for North Luzon</p>	<p>The Committee, presided by Rep. Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano (1st District, Ilocos Sur), listened to the briefing by DOT on its 2018 plans and programs for Regions I, II, and III and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).</p> <p>DOT CAR Regional Director Marie Venus Tan apprised the Committee of the activities that will be implemented for this year to further boost the region's tourism industry, among which are the following: accredit additional commercial establishments in the tourism industry; participate in travel fairs; partner with agencies in charge with disaster risk prevention and mitigation; conduct regular training programs for tourist workers; and intensify the promotion of farm tourism.</p> <p>With regard to the DOT Trip-C Program, which involves road convergence projects, Rep. Savellano asked Tan to clarify the role of House Members in the said program. Tan said that the lawmakers may recommend the roads that may be constructed or upgraded, adding that the objective of the program is to connect various tourist destinations in all the provinces.</p> <p>For Region I, DOT Regional Director Martin Valera informed the Committee that the Department's efforts are focused on the following: monitoring of compliance by tourist establishments with DOT standards; continuous development of skills in the local tourism industry; and accreditation of more commercial tourist establishments. In addition, the promotion of flights to Laoag International Airport and cruises via the region's various ports are also a priority of DOT Region I.</p> <p>For Region II, DOT's Chief Tourism Operations Officer Fanibeth Domingo said that the Region will focus on tourism product development and capacity development programs for boatmen, tourist guides, transport operators and service providers.</p> <p>As for Region III, DOT Regional Director Carolina Uy presented the Department's major projects for 2018 such as the construction of the sports complex that will host the 2019 Southeast Asian Games, expansion of the Clark International Airport, and upgrading of the Subic Bay Port.</p> <p>Baguio City Rep. Mark Go and Rep. Amado Espino Jr. (5th District, Pangasinan) advised the DOT regional directors present in the meeting to be more persistent in communicating the urgent requirements of their respective regions to the DOT Secretary in order to get a higher budget for 2019, reminding them of the upcoming 2019 budget deliberations in Congress.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Ramon Gerry Cabalce, chief executive officer of Wakay Air Transport Services Inc., informed the Committee of the company's initial efforts to showcase the feasibility of using Bagabag airport in Nueva Vizcaya in bringing tourists to the area in the hope that other airlines would follow suit. However, Cabalce also talked of the small number of travelers using this route making Wakay Air, owned by the Singson group of companies, to decide to temporarily suspend its flights to Bagabag until a solution to improve its profitability is reached.</p> <p>DOT stated that once major airlines come in, the airstrip in Bagabag will be expanded to accommodate commercial flights.</p> <p>Rep. Go said he will also draft a resolution urging the conduct of an inquiry, jointly with the Committee on Transportation, on the feasibility of introducing commercial flights to Bagabag.</p>
<p>Sustainable Development Goals (Special Committee)</p>	<p>Briefing by the bureaus of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on their plans and programs for the achievement of two of 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), nos. 14 and 15, set by the United Nations (UN):</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Elisa "Olga" Kho (2nd District, Masbate), listened to the presentation of four of the DENR bureaus on their plans and programs for the achievement of SDGs 14 and 15.</p> <p>SDG 14 aims to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources; while SDG 15 aims to protect, restore, and promote the</p>

<p>Continuation... Sustainable Development Goals (Special Committee)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) 	<p>the area. Aguilar replied that black sand mining is already banned in the country, but she promised to raise the matter to the DENR management.</p> <p>BMB's National Parks Division Chief Meriden Maranan briefed the Committee on the National Protected Area System Master Plan for 2018 to 2028.</p> <p>The Plan's vision is to have a comprehensive, ecologically-representative, equitably and effectively managed national system of protected areas. The priority activities under the master plan include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demarcation of boundaries of protected areas included in the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas (ENIPAS); • Biodiversity assessment; • Formulation/updating of protected area management plan; and • Strengthening of biodiversity monitoring and law enforcement.
<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, terminated its discussion of a major problem confronting the Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA), specifically the Supreme Court's ruling favoring the private claimant, Richard Unchuan, of the land occupied by the airport as the true and legal owner of the land in question and ordering MCIAA to pay Unchuan P2.5 billion as rental for the use of the said land.</p> <p>The Committee urged the government panel, composed of the MCIAA and the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG), to ably protect and safeguard the interest of the government and the public in general against private individuals or entities which appear to be syndicates in reality.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento stressed that government must exhaust all legal remedies to protect its interests especially since other MCIAA properties may be at stake as a consequence of losing the said case.</p> <p>MCIAA General Manager Steve Dicdican highlighted some deliberate shortcomings on the part of the OSG lawyers who handled the case which he believes have caused MCIAA to lose its case to Unchuan, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to file supplemental motion for reconsideration; • Failure to apprise MCIAA of the Supreme Court's (SC) Resolution on the motion for reconsideration; • Failure to apprise MCIAA of the hearing on the motion for execution of judgment; • Failure to oppose motion for execution; and • Refusal to file a case in favor of or as requested by MCIAA. <p>Assistant Solicitor General Henry Angeles expressed regret over the alleged mishandling of the MCIAA case and committed to reprimand erring OSG lawyer Mauricia Dinopol, if warranted.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to the inclusion of Deputy Speaker Gwendolyn Garcia (3rd District, Cebu) and Rep. Raul del Mar (1st District, Cebu City) as ex-officio members of the task force created by the OSG to study possible legal remedies in favor of the MCIAA.</p>