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BUDGET BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Appropriations	<p>Briefing on the proposed FY 2019 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the following government offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Tourism (DOT) and its attached agencies 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (1st District, Davao City), listened to the presentation on the proposed FY 2019 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the DOT and DSWD.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Michael John "Jack" Duavit (1st District, Rizal), sat as the presiding officer during the budget briefing of the DOT and its attached agencies.</p> <p>Under the FY 2019 National Expenditure Program (NEP), the DOT and its attached agencies are set to receive P3.39 billion, which is 2.69% lower than their current budget of P3.48 billion.</p> <p>The DOT's proposed budget will be distributed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DOT - P3.08 billion; National Parks Development Committee (NPDC) – P286.10 million; and Intramuros Administration (IA) - P65.89 million. <p>DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat apprised the Committee of the Department's thrusts which include the following: creation of a culture of sustainable tourism; improvement of policies on access, connectivity and security; enhancement of tourism infrastructure; and the revitalization of global advertising and promotion efforts.</p> <p>When asked about the reason behind the decrease in the tourism's share to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) from 12.2% in 2017 to 8.4% in 2018, Puyat clarified that the figures presented were only targets and that the tourism sector already surpassed these projections. Puyat added that despite the closure of Boracay, tourism continues to flourish posting a 10.4% increase during the first half of 2018 as compared to the same period last year. She promised to provide the Committee with an updated report on the performance of the tourism sector as soon as possible.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Aklan Rep. Carlito Marquez, Puyat said that the reopening of Boracay Island on October 26 will push through based on her conversation with Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu.</p> <p>Meanwhile, several Committee Members asked for an update on the investigation into the controversial P60-million advertising deal between the DOT and a television program run by brothers Ben and Erwin Tulfo. The questionable deal happened during the term of former DOT Secretary Wanda Teo, who is also the sister of the Tulfos.</p> <p>Puyat refrained from issuing any comment on the case and requested the Members to wait for the Commission on Audit's (COA) findings.</p>

<p>Continuation... Appropriations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) 	<p>Rep. Anthony Bravo, Ph.D. (Party-List, COOP NATCCO) asked about the unused funds in the DOT's FY 2017 budget amounting to P304 million. He said that it neither appears in the Department's continuing appropriations for 2018 nor in the National Treasury's savings. Puyat promised to convey the query to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).</p> <p>Concerns over the presence of informal settlers within Intramuros, a historic site in Manila, were also raised by several lawmakers. According to them, these informal settlers contribute to the defacement of the "Walled City" which is under the management of the IA.</p> <p>IA Administrator Guiller Asido informed the Committee that his office has already relocated majority of the informal settlers in the area. Those who remained are occupying private properties, hence appropriate coordination between the property owners and the IA should be undertaken first before relocating the affected dwellers.</p> <p>When asked to elaborate on how the Department plans to improve tourism in the country, the Tourism Secretary said that access and connectivity should be improved such as through the construction and rehabilitation of airports. DOT Undersecretary Benito Bengzon Jr. added that the DOT will reach out to new geographic markets such as the Middle East, Turkey and Europe, as well as invest heavily in digital platforms to promote the country's tourism through the use of social media.</p> <p>Citing incidents of death of tourists while on vacation in the country, Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon underscored that apart from promoting tourism, the Department should also ensure the safety of tourists.</p> <p>The DOT was requested to submit a report concerning its tourism-industry skills program as well as the other information requested by the different Committee Members during the briefing.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Oscar "Richard" Garin Jr. (1st District, Iloilo), sat as the presiding officer during the budget briefing of the DSWD.</p> <p>Under the FY 2019 NEP, the DSWD will get a total of P136.68 billion, which is 3.61% lower than the current year's appropriation of P141.81 billion.</p> <p>Acting DSWD Secretary Virginia Orogo reported the Department's proposed expenditures for next year which show considerable decreases in capital outlay (CO) by 97.97% and financial expenses by 34.82%. Meanwhile, there is relative decrease in maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) by 2.74%, and a relative increase in personnel services (PS) by 12.85%.</p> <p>Orogo also cited the top priority programs of the Department for 2019 which include the following: Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens (SPISC); Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP); National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction or "Listahanan"; Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services - National Community-Driven Development Program (KALAHI-CIDSS NCDDP), and the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP).</p> <p>Replying to the query of Committee Members on the notable decrease of budget allocations for integral programs such as the KALAHI-CIDSS NCDDP and the SLP, Orogo explained that the</p>
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Continuation... Appropriations		<p>decreases are due to the national government's transition to annual cash-based budgeting.</p> <p>Annual cash-based budgeting, as opposed to multi-year obligations-based budgeting, limits incurring obligations and disbursing payments for goods delivered and services rendered, inspected, and accepted within the fiscal year. This means that the extent of budget implementation is just one year, with an "extended payment period" of three months after the fiscal year (Source: DBM website)</p> <p>The Members support the Department's request to increase its 2019 budget allocation in order to reinforce its programs that are crucial to countryside development.</p>
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Appropriations	Substitute Bill to HBs 7458, 7214, 36, 231, 1537, 1658, 2379, 3359, 3835, 5384, 6037 & 7364	Reps. Cua, Suansing (H.), Yap (A.), Singson, Herrera-Dy, Angara-Castillo, Quimbo, Garin, Zubiri, Villafuerte, and Benitez	Tax Reform for Attracting Better and High Quality Opportunities (TRABAHO) law	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (1st District, Davao City), approved the substitute bill to the 12 bills.</p> <p>Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua, Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, said that the purpose of including Section 312 (Structural Adjustment Fund) in the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997 is to provide funds to compensate workers that will be displaced by the rationalization of fiscal incentives, mitigate its negative impact and improve the employability of workers.</p>
Welfare of Children	Substitute Bill to HBs 516 & 6955	Reps. Herrera-Dy and Silverio	Promoting positive and non-violent discipline and protecting children from physical, humiliating or degrading acts as a form of punishment and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Divina Grace Yu (1 st District, Zamboanga del Sur), approved with amendments the Substitute Bill to HBs 516 and 6955. The bill will be referred to the Committee on Appropriations for review of its funding provisions.
Women and Gender Equality	HB 3200	Rep. Villarín	Promoting women participation and equitable representation in and by political parties, giving incentives therefor, creating the Women in Political Parties Empowerment Fund	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Bernadette Herrera-Dy (Party-List, BAGONG HENERASYON), will deliberate further on HB 3200 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Tom Villarín (Party-List, AKBAYAN), author of HB 3200, manifested that the explanatory note attached to his bill be included in the records as his sponsorship speech.</p> <p>HB 3200 aims to increase the quantity and quality of women participation in politics and governance, through the adoption of an incentive system that would institutionalize a gender-based public service system.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their official position paper on the proposed law.</p>

Continuation... Women and Gender Equality	HB 5584	Rep. Sandoval	Defining domestic violence against individuals including members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, other than women and children, and providing for protective measures for victims, prescribing penalties therefor	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 5584 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Malabon Rep. Federico "Ricky" Sandoval II, author of HB 5584, manifested that the explanatory note attached to his bill be included in the records as his sponsorship speech.</p> <p>HB 5584 aims to include violence against men and members of the LGBT community in the definition of domestic violence.</p> <p>Spokesperson for the Coalition of Christian for Change, Professor Jochebed de la Cruz, expressed support for the bill, adding that laws against violence must be strengthened.</p> <p>However, Ma. Rebecca Rafaela Baylosis, Supervising Gender and Development Specialist of the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), expressed apprehension on the proposed law, saying that this might be subject to abuse by men who may use it to protect them from cases of abuse filed against them.</p> <p>Rep. Sandoval stressed that victims of domestic violence are not only women and children but may also be members of the LGBT community and even men themselves.</p> <p>Police Chief Superintendent William Macavinta, head of the Philippine National Police Women and Children Protection Center, confirmed that there are recorded reports of domestic abuse of husbands.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their official position paper on the proposed law.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Higher and Technical Education (Technical Working Group)	HB 181	Rep. Crisologo	Instituting free college education for indigent students	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Jose Antonio "Kuya Jonathan" Sy-Alvarado (1st District, Bulacan), will deliberate further on HB 181 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Vincent "Bingbong" Crisologo (1st District, Quezon City), author of HB 181, explained that unlike RA 10931 (Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act of 2017) where all college enrollees in state universities and colleges (SUCs) enjoy free education through subsidies from the national government, his bill intends to provide indigent students free tertiary education in private higher education institutions. Under the bill,</p>

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education (Technical Working Group)				<p>private HEIs shall be required to admit indigent students for free, whose number shall be at least 10% of the school's paying freshman enrollees.</p> <p>Representatives from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Education (DepEd), Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Board, and the Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations of the Philippines (COCOPEA), presented their views on the proposed law.</p> <p>The Committee requested the resource persons to submit their position papers on the bill.</p>
Natural Resources (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 50, 907, 1104, 1171, 1213, 1893 & 5194	Reps. Fortun, Castro (F.H.), Baguilat, Cayetano, Yu, Defensor, and Villanueva	Providing for the sustainable management of forests and forest lands	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Rodrigo Abellanosa (2nd District, Cebu City), will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>The small group, which crafted the draft substitute bill, reported to the authors the discussions and agreements made among the members in coming up with the substitute bill. The group is composed of representatives from the Forest Management Bureau (FMB), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Society of Filipino Foresters, Inc. (SFFI), and Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA).</p> <p>The bills' authors questioned some of the provisions in the substitute bill for being unclear or for lack of pertinent information. They suggested the following: spell-out in the bill the structure and responsibility of the Forest Management Bureau as a line bureau under the DENR (Section 32); set the minimum qualification standards for forest managers (Section 15); describe the specific approach on the strict enforcement of laws protecting the forest; and delineate the forest land that will be managed by forest managers.</p> <p>Authors present during the meeting were: Reps. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte), Teddy Brawner Baguilat Jr. (Ifugao), and Arthur Defensor Jr. (3rd District, Iloilo).</p>