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CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Conference Committee	HB 8784 & SB 1299	Rep. Laogan and Sen. Villanueva	Providing that service charges collected by hotels, restaurants and other similar establishments be distributed in full to all covered employees, amending for the purpose PD 442, as amended, otherwise known as the Labor Code of the Philippines	<p>The Conference Committee meeting, co-chaired over by Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma, Chair of the House Committee on Labor and Employment, and Sen. Joel Villanueva, Chair of the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development, approved the reconciled version of HB 8784 and SB 1299.</p> <p>The proposed law seeks to amend Article 96 of the Labor Code by equally distributing 100% of the service charge collected by hotels, restaurants and similar establishments among all the covered workers except managerial employees.</p> <p>The Conference Committee adopted, among others, the following provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event that the minimum wage is increased by law or wage order, service charges paid to the covered employees shall not be considered in determining the employer's compliance with the increased minimum wage; and In case of dispute on the distribution of the service charges, a grievance mechanism shall be established. If such mechanism is non-existent or inadequate, the case shall be referred to the regional office of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) which has jurisdiction over the workplace for conciliation.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Appropriations	Substitute Bill to HBs 8124, 8189, 8527 & 8635	Deputy Speaker Yap, Reps. Gatchalian, Salceda, and Speaker	Institutionalizing the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) as the independent economic and planning agency of the Philippine Government, defining its functions and amending EO	The Committee meeting, presided over by its Vice Chair, Rep. Maria Carmen Zamora (1 st District, Compostela Valley), approved the appropriations provision of the substitute bill, as amended.

Continuation... Appropriations		Macapagal-Arroyo	230 series of 1987, appropriating funds therefor	<p>Among the agreed amendments to the substitute bill were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization, composition, staffing and compensation of NEDA shall be subject to the evaluation and approval of the Department of Budget and Management (Section 11); and • The Secretary of NEDA shall be appointed by the President with the consent of the Commission on Audit (COA).
Good Government and Public Accountability	HR 1385	Rep. Romualdo	Directing the Committee on Energy to conduct an inquiry into the financial condition and viability of the Camiguin Electric Cooperative, Inc., (CAMELCO), the performance of the National Electrification Administration (NEA) of its mandate to supervise electric cooperatives, and the performance of the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) of its duty to protect and promote the interests of consumers	<p>The Committee, chaired by Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo, terminated its deliberation on the issues raised in HR 1385. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Rep. Romualdo informed the Committee that a public hearing was held on March 18, 2019 in Camiguin, wherein the stakeholders raised their concern on the management and operational conditions of CAMELCO. It was observed that the bulk of CAMELCO's funds went into administrative and general expenses rather than operations, maintenance and consumer services which would normally be the case in the operations of electric cooperatives.</p> <p>To address the issues surrounding the operations of CAMELCO, Rep. Romualdo said that one of the recommendations of the Committee is to put in place stringent qualification requirements for members of the Board of Directors and General Manager-elect of electric cooperatives.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Romualdo, National Electrification Administration's (NEA) Performance Assessment and Special Studies Director Ana Rosa Papa disclosed that CAMELCO enjoyed a "AAA" rating from 2014 to 2017. She explained that although CAMELCO's audited financial statements for the past four years show that it has been in a very poor financial condition, NEA granted CAMELCO a "AAA" rating because it satisfied the other criteria except that of profitability which accounts to only 5%.</p> <p>However, NEA is presently reviewing the 2018 data submitted by CAMELCO and has assigned different teams to evaluate each of the factors for determining the financial, institutional, and technical performance of CAMELCO for 2018.</p> <p>The "AAA" rating is the highest overall performance rating given by NEA on the financial, institutional, and technical performance of electric cooperatives.</p>

Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability				With the impending threats from power generation companies to cut off power supply to CAMELCO due to non-payment of outstanding debts amounting to P47 million as of December 2018, Rep. Romualdo urged the concerned government agencies to assist in the needed financial recovery of CAMELCO.
Government Enterprises and Privatization jt. w/ Public Works and Highways	HR 2547	Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Strongly urging the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), National Water Resources Board (NWRB), Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), Department of Agriculture (DA), National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Manila Water Company, Inc. (MWCI), and Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (MWSI) to immediately form a technical working group to enhance and execute mitigation strategies to avert the recurrence of water shortage in Metro Manila and provide sustainable supply of clean and safe water for its citizens now and in the future	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Jesus Nonato Sacdalan (1st District, North Cotabato), Chair for the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization, and Rep. Bayani Fernando (1st District, Marikina City), Chair of the Committee on Public Works and Highways, agreed to report out HR 2547, subject to styling by the Secretariat.</p> <p>The proposed technical working group (TWG) is tasked to ensure that government agencies and private entities concerned with the delivery of quality water service shall address the water crisis with dispatch using relevant strategies.</p>
	HR 2548	Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Strongly urging the MWSS, MWSS-Regulatory Office (MWSS-RO), NWRB, LWUA, Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), NIA, MWCI, and MWSI to immediately formulate a water security masterplan to secure and sustain the supply of water for household, commercial, and industrial uses in Metro Manila that may be duplicated in other parts of the country	<p>The Joint Committee agreed to report out HR 2548.</p> <p>The TWG that is being proposed by HR 2547 will assist in the formulation of a water security masterplan to secure and sustain adequate supply of water in Metro Manila.</p> <p>Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), co-author of HRs 2547 and 2548, underscored the need to come up with alternative plans to address water shortage. He added that the water crisis experienced by thousands of residents in the East zone of Metro Manila early this year could have been avoided if appropriate measures were put in place.</p> <p>Rep. Rodante Marcoleta (Party-List, SAGIP) chided MWSS for its failure to oversee the operations of the two water concessionaires in Metro Manila – Maynilad and Manila Water. To him, LWUA which administers 521 water districts fared better than MWSS in terms of securing the availability of water at all times.</p> <p>MWSS Field Operations Department Manager Jose Alfredo Escoto Jr. and representatives from Maynilad and Manila Water explained that the water crisis in Metro Manila could be attributed to the lack of water source to supply the water requirement of Metro Manila which is 4,360 million liters per day.</p> <p>To help address the matter, Minority Leader Danilo Suarez (3rd District, Quezon) suggested the construction of a dam that would serve as reservoir of water coming from the mountains of Sierra Madre. This, the Minority Leader said, could augment the water requirement of Metro Manila and Regions III and IV.</p>

Public Order and Safety	Privilege Speech 451	Rep. Crisologo	<p>Inquiry into the alleged abuse of authority of Philippine National Police (PNP) Lt. Col. Alex Alberto, Commander, Quezon City Police Station 3, in ordering his arrest together with his lawyer-son and supporters last May 12, 2019 for alleged “vote buying”</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City), discussed the issues raised relative to Privilege Speech 451.</p> <p>According to Rep. Acop, the purpose of the inquiry is to find out if proper police procedures were followed and if violations of human rights were committed by PNP personnel in the conduct of the arrest.</p> <p>Rep. Crisologo, who ran for Quezon City mayor during the May 13 election, was arrested at a house in Bahay Toro, Quezon City for alleged obstruction of justice, vote buying, direct assault, unjust vexation, and illegal detention.</p> <p>According to Rep. Crisologo, the charges against him were fabricated and that the arrest was violative of his immunity as a lawmaker as enshrined in Section 11, Article VI of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. His supporters also testified that the Quezon City Police arrested them without being read their Miranda rights and without being told of their violations.</p> <p>“Miranda rights” refers to the rights of an arrested individual such as the right to remain silent, the right to consult with an attorney and have the attorney present during questioning, and the right to have an attorney appointed if indigent. The arrested individual cannot be questioned by the police in the context of a custodial interrogation until one is made aware of these rights. <i>(Source: Cornell Law website)</i></p> <p>Furthermore, Rep. Crisologo informed the Committee that Quezon City Prosecutor’s Office released him and his supporters for lack of sufficient evidence. He also presented video clips to show the alleged unlawful arrest of his supporters.</p> <p>Section 11, Article VI, of the Constitution provides that “a Senator or Member of the House of Representatives shall, in all offenses punishable by not more than six years imprisonment, be privileged from arrest while the Congress is in session.”</p> <p>In line with this, Quezon City Police District Chief Brigadier General Joselito Esquivel said that the arrest was valid as the arrest was conducted while Congress was not in session. He also presented video clips of the arrest to disprove allegations of abuse by PNP personnel during the arrest.</p> <p>Meanwhile, National Capital Region Police Chief Guillermo Eleazar and PNP Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management Director Elmo Francis Sanora said that while the PNP acted in accordance with the PNP</p>
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Continuation... Public Order and Safety				<p>operational procedures, a thorough and impartial investigation will still be conducted.</p> <p>National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) Vice Chairman and Executive Officer Rogelio Casurao apprised the Committee that an investigation of the arrest is already being conducted and that the findings of the Commission will be forwarded to the Committee once it is finalized.</p> <p>Rep. Crisologo expressed his hope that the inquiry will result to a legislation that will strengthen the parliamentary immunity of the Members from arrest, provide stiffer penalties for violators, and institutionalize proper procedures in police operations.</p>
Ways and Means	HB 9194	Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Establishing the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) hospital and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee meeting, presided over by its Vice Chair, Rep. Lianda Bolilia (4th District, Batangas), approved with amendments the tax provision of HB 9194.</p> <p>Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga) informed the body that the bill was referred to the Committee for its tax provision after being approved by the Committee on Appropriations the day before in a joint meeting held with the Committee on Health, with no objections from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Evelina Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon) suggested that the tax provision of HB 9194 be amended as follows: "All grants, requests, endowments, donations, and contributions made to the OFW hospital to be used actually, directly or exclusively by the OFW hospital should be exempt from donor's taxes and the same shall be considered as allowable deductions from the gross income of the donor in accordance with the provision of the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) of 1997 as amended." Likewise, the importation of equipment, machinery, and spare parts which are used solely and exclusively for the operation of the OFW hospital that are not available locally shall be exempt from value-added tax (VAT) and customs duty."</p> <p>The representative from the Departments of Finance (DOF), Health (DOH), National Tax Research Center (NTRC), and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) expressed their support for the bill.</p>

OTHER MATTERS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Veterans Affairs and Welfare	Report on the Committee's accomplishments for the 17 th Congress and its legislative recommendations for the 18 th Congress	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Leopoldo Bataoil (2 nd District, Pangasinan), reported its accomplishments for the 17 th Congress as well as its legislative recommendations for the 18 th Congress.

<p>Continuation... Veterans Affairs and Welfare</p>		<p>Rep. Bataoil said that during the 17th Congress, the Committee pushed for the passage of RA 11164 or the law increasing the monthly old-age pension of senior veterans of World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars from P5,000 to P20,000. This, he said, was made possible with the help of his fellow legislators and concerned government agencies.</p> <p>Other measures being pursued by the Committee for enactment into law are: HB 1240, authored by Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga), which grants juridical personality to the present Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC); and HBs 1128 and 1262, authored by Reps. Gary Alejano (Party-List, MAGDALO) and Rozzano Rufino Biazon (Muntinlupa City), respectively. Both HBs 1128 and 1262 seek to utilize the proceeds from the development, lease, or use of certain government properties for payment of pensions and other benefits of veterans.</p> <p>Rep. Bataoil also announced the legislative recommendations that he hopes will be considered in the 18th Congress, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the pension benefit of veterans/retirees who died in combat from P1,700 to P10,000 per month; • Allocation of additional funding of P53 million to augment the P350 million budget for the payment of medicines and hospital expenses in cases where veterans are confined in hospitals aside from VMMC; • Improvement of the condition of historical shrines and interconnect roads leading to these sites; • Rehabilitation and transformation of the Libingan ng mga Bayani (LNMB) in Fort Bonifacio into a world class national cemetery; and • Establishment of the LNMB in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.
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