

COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Local Government	HB 4866	Rep. Revilla	Amending Section 10 (b) of RA 10160, otherwise known as the Charter of the City of Bacoor, Cavite (by renaming barangays P.F. Espiritu I-VIII to Panapaan I-VIII and including Barangay Zapote V among the barangays comprising the Bacoor West District)	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Pedro Acharon Jr. (1 st District, South Cotabato and General Santos City), approved HB 4866.
	HBs 433 & 7601	Deputy Speaker Escudero and Rep. Rodriguez (M.)	Reverting to the national government the discharge of basic agricultural functions and responsibilities devolved to local government units (LGUs), amending for the purpose RA 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the seven bills. Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) was designated as chair of the TWG.
	HBs 736, 1086, 3334, 5083 & 7326	Deputy Speaker Escudero and Reps. Lanete, Noel, Zarate, and Almario	Reverting to the national government the discharge of basic health services devolved to LGUs, amending for the purpose RA 7160	Rep. Zarate, author of HB 5083, said that the devolution of the government's healthcare delivery system pursuant to RA 7160 gave rise to various problems especially in terms of delivery of quality healthcare, which became fragmented. He pointed out that there are government services in the health and agriculture sectors that just cannot be devolved to the LGUs to be effectively implemented. Likewise, Dr. Joseph Carabeo, president of Action Health Workers, expressed full support to the proposed law, adding that various national health organizations welcome the reversion to the national government of the discharge of basic health services as a step forward to solving the problems confronting the country's healthcare system. Carabeo also underscored the need to allocate adequate budget for a unified public health care system. On the other hand, OIC-Division Chief John Aries Macaspac of the Local Government and Regional Coordination Bureau (LGRCB), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), maintained that the intentions of the bills run counter to the government's policy of decentralization and right-sizing the bureaucracy.
	HBs 1054, 2612 & 4192	Reps. Antonino, Santos-Recto, and Matugas	Increasing the share of LGUs in the national internal revenue taxes, further amending for the purpose Section 284 of RA 7160	The Committee agreed to create a TWG to consolidate the eight bills. Rep. Francisco Jose "Bingo" Matugas II (1 st District, Surigao del Norte) was designated as chair of the TWG.
	HB 2613	Rep. Santos-Recto	Strengthening LGUs by increasing to 50% their share in the annual Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA)	Rep. Acharon inquired on the implications of the Supreme Court (SC) ruling that the revenue share of the LGUs must be computed based on and sourced from all national taxes
	HB 2614	Rep. Santos-Recto	Including in the computation of the IRA, all the national internal revenue taxes collected by the Bureau of Internal	

Continuation... Local Government			Revenue (BIR) and the Bureau of Customs (BOC), amending for the purpose Section 284 of RA 7160	and not just from the national internal revenue taxes.
	HB 4082	Rep. Tambunting	Providing for the share in the national taxes of LGUs, amending for this purpose RA 7160	Department of Finance's (DOF) Fiscal Policy and Planning Office Director Elsa Agustin opined that if the SC ruling will be implemented, the national government will have to scale down its expenditures or resort to borrowing.
	HB 4697	Rep. Villafuerte	Intensifying local government participation in national development by increasing the IRA of LGUs from 40% to 60% of all national taxes collected by the BIR and other government agencies and authorizing the LGUs to automatically retain their IRA, amending Sections 284 and 286 of RA 7160	League of Provinces (LOP) Executive Director Sandra Paredes conveyed LOP's support to an increase in the IRA of LGUs. However, she said that there should be prior consultation between the LOP and the DBM to ensure transparency and accountability in the allocation and utilization of the IRA.
	HB 7012	Rep. Alejano	Strengthening LGUs by rationalizing the formula of the annual IRA share of LGUs	
Overseas Workers Affairs	HB 4073	Rep. Pacquiao	Expanding the use of the Legal Assistance Fund, amending for the purpose Section 26 of RA 8042, otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, as amended	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesulito Manalo (Party-List, ANGKLA), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to fine-tune the bills.
	HB 5499	Rep. Bertiz	Further amending RA 8042, as amended by RA 10022, to strengthen the standard of protection of the welfare of migrant workers by criminalizing the practice of decking	The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Jose "Ping-ping" Tejada (3 rd District, North Cotabato).
	HB 5543	Rep. Romero	Amending RA 10022, which amended RA 8042, fostering the imposition of all existing policies and guidelines, promoting a higher standard of protection and welfare, increasing its penalties and sanctions	Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Undersecretary Sarah Lou Arriola informed the Committee that under DFA's Department Order 15-2017, the use of the Legal Assistance Fund (LAF) for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) has already been expanded. Rep. Manalo and Rep. Raul del Mar (1 st District, Cebu City) explained that even with this department order, a law is still necessary to institutionalize the fund's expanded use. Meanwhile, Filipino Migrant Workers' Group (FMWG) President Jun Aguilar suggested that stiffer penalties should be imposed against abusive labor officials who use their authority to exploit or take advantage of distressed OFWs. He cited the case of a labor official who was only given a four-month suspension for simple misconduct after being involved in a "sex-for-repatriation" controversy.
Trade and Industry jt. w/ Health	HBs 532, 3330, 4325, 4810, 7289, 7935 & 7993	Reps. Batocabe, Olivarez, Biazon, Noel, Villafuerte, and Barbers	Regulating the use, packaging, sale, distribution, and advertisement of electronic cigarettes or vaporized nicotine products (VNPs)	The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Ferjenel Biron, M.D. (4 th District, Iloilo), Chair of the Committee on Trade and Industry, and Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2 nd District, Bataan), Vice Chair of the Committee on Health, agreed to deliberate further on the seven bills in its next meeting. AKO BICOL Party-List Reps. Rodel Batocabe and Alfredo Garbin Jr., authors of HB 3330, and Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon, author of HB 4810, presented the merits of regulating the sale, distribution, and

<p>Continuation... Trade and Industry jt. w/ Health</p>				<p>use of VNPs to ensure the safety and efficacy of these products.</p> <p>Rep. Biazon said results of several researches indicate that VNPs cause more damage to one's health in the long run compared to tobacco products.</p> <p>Representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Health (DOH), and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) expressed support for the bills.</p> <p>Also supportive of the bills were representatives from the Philippine E-Cigarette Industry Association (PECIA), Vapers Philippines, Philippine Tobacco Institute (PTI), and Health Justice Philippines. They believe that establishing a regulatory framework for VNPs will level the playing field in this industry.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA) inquired which government agency is responsible for validating the health hazards posed by VNPs. FDA Director Ana Trinidad Rivera said that it is the FDA, saying that it has the mandate to ascertain the safety, efficacy, and quality of consumer products to ensure that such would not be harmful to the people.</p> <p>Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City) asked the FDA if the regulation of tobacco products, as well as the VNPs, is within its authority. Rivera replied in the affirmative, adding that the harmful effects of tobacco products and the potential effects of VNPs on the health of the people make them subject to the regulations of the FDA.</p> <p>Meanwhile, PECIA President Joey Dulay refuted the statement of Rivera that no company engaged in the manufacture and sale of VNPs has registered with the FDA. Dulay claimed that his company has applied for registration with the FDA but the latter has not accepted the application saying that there were no guidelines formulated yet relative to such licensing. (PECIA is composed of store owners, suppliers, and manufacturers of electronic cigarettes and related products in the country.)</p> <p>Several Members of the Committee agreed that VNPs should be regulated, yet emphasized the need to establish the proper agency that should regulate this industry.</p> <p>Rep. Biron asked the stakeholders present to submit their comments and recommendations on the bill.</p>
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IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Justice	Continuation of the deliberations on the consolidated complaints for impeachment against seven Associate Justices of the Supreme Court (SC) filed by Reps. Edcel Lagman, Teddy Brawner Baguilat Jr. and Gary Alejano	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Doy Leachon (1st District, Oriental Mindoro), terminated its deliberations on the consolidated impeachment complaints after determining them to be insufficient in substance. The Secretariat was directed to draft the corresponding Committee Report and the accompanying resolution dismissing the complaints.</p> <p>Prior to this, Rep. Edcel Lagman (1st District, Albay) defended the sufficiency in substance of the complaints arguing that such determination only requires a recital of facts constituting the offense charged and determinative of the jurisdiction of the Committee. He asserted that Congress has the sole power to remove from office all impeachable officials and only through the impeachment process.</p> <p>However, several Members of the Committee agreed with the contention that the consolidated impeachment complaints were insufficient in substance and that the allegations in the complaints are, among others, violative of the constitutional doctrine of separation of powers since they involve a decision rendered by the SC that already form part of the law of the land.</p> <p>Siquijor Rep. Ramon V.A. "Rav" Rocamora, the only one who voted on his motion to find the complaints sufficient in substance, argued that the Justices expressed clear bias against Sereno during the impeachment proceedings and that the Justices should have inhibited themselves from voting in the <i>quo warranto</i> case. (Rep. Lagman, along with the other complainants, cannot vote on the motion as per the rules of impeachment.)</p>

AGENCY BRIEFINGS

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Bicol Recovery and Economic Development (Special Committee)	Briefing by government agencies on their plans and programs for 2019 and the status of implementation of their programs and projects for this year in the Bicol Region	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Renato Unico Jr. (1st District, Camarines Norte), discussed with the Region 5 offices of the following government agencies their plans and programs for 2019 and current programs and projects: Departments of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Education (DepEd) and Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Philippine National Police (PNP), and Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).</p> <p>One major concern that has been discussed was the effect of the cash-based budgeting system required by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) on the implementation of government programs in Region 5.</p> <p>All the representatives of the six government agencies present in the meeting confirmed that the cash-based budgeting system, which allows the use of funds only within the year they are allocated, will reduce the budget allocations for Region 5 for fiscal year 2019 and will consequently reduce the number or narrow down the coverage of their proposed programs.</p> <p>DPWH Region V Director Virgilio Eduarte informed the Committee that under the 2019 National Expenditure Program (NEP), the region will have a budget of P36.35 billion, which is lower than the current budget of P41 billion. Eduarte said that the way to fully implement priority infrastructure projects is by securing a multi-year obligational authority (MYOA) from the DBM that will authorize the DPWH to enter into multi-year contracts for certain projects and receive funding annually until they are completed.</p>

<p>Continuation... Bicol Recovery and Economic Development (Special Committee)</p>		<p>DepEd Region V OIC-Director Gilbert Sadsad said that the shift from obligation-based to cash-based budgeting will primarily affect the construction of classrooms around the country. He said that from the original proposal of 47,000 classrooms, the number was reduced to 4,700.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Evelina Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon) called for a closer examination of the cash-based budget approach as she expressed concern that the lack of classrooms and other facilities will seriously affect the quality of education in the country.</p> <p>PNP Region 5's Regional Logistic and Research Development Division head Jeffrey Fernandez reported that out of the 15 proposed police stations to be constructed in the region, only four were approved. The said four stations will be constructed one each in the provinces of Camarines Sur and Albay, and two in the province of Sorsogon.</p> <p>Similarly, MGB Region 5 OIC-Director Guillermo Molina spoke of a 50% reduction in his office's miscellaneous and other operating expenses (MOOE), which he said will affect its enforcement capabilities.</p> <p>Members of the Committee will discuss with NEDA Region V office their specific concerns regarding the effects of the rising inflation, which supposedly reached 9% in Bicol Region, and of the cash-based budgeting on the programs and projects in the region, as well as the measures that should be undertaken to mitigate such negative effects.</p>
<p>Overseas Workers Affairs</p>	<p>Update on the implementation of Section 4 of RA 8042, or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, as amended by RA 10022</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesulito Manalo (Party-List, ANGKLA), discussed with concerned agencies the status of implementation of Section 4 of RA 8042, as amended.</p> <p>Rep. Manalo reiterated that pursuant to Section 4 of RA 8042, the deployment of overseas Filipino workers shall be allowed "only in countries where the rights of Filipino migrant workers are protected."</p> <p>Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Undersecretary Sarah Lou Arriola opined that RA 8042, as amended, lacks the mechanism that will determine whether or not a receiving country can guarantee the protection of the rights of OFWs.</p> <p>Arriola requested that sensitive details on the matter be discussed in an executive session. The Committee agreed to schedule an executive session at a later date.</p> <p>Aside from the DFA, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), and Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) will be allowed to attend the executive session.</p>
	<p>Update on the situation of OFWs in Libya</p>	<p>The Committee discussed with concerned agencies the situation of OFWs in Libya.</p> <p>Arriola reported that the DFA raised Alert Level III or voluntary repatriation for Filipinos who are still in war-torn Libya. She said that a number of OFWs expressed their willingness to be repatriated due to the precarious peace and order situation in that country.</p> <p>OWWA Administrator Hans Leo Cacdac gave an update on the cases of OFWs in Libya which the OWWA is monitoring. He said that OWWA is providing assistance to the distressed migrant workers in Libya.</p> <p>As to the status of the three Filipino workers who were kidnapped in western Libya on July 9, Cacdac said that the whereabouts of the victims are still unknown. Nevertheless, he assured the Committee that the families of the victims were given financial assistance by the employer.</p>

Continuation... Overseas Workers Affairs		<p>With regard to the 20 Filipino seafarers who were detained in Libya since August 2017 for alleged oil smuggling, Cacdac said that 13 were already released. The seven seafarers who are still incarcerated are the officials of the vessel. He added that the manning agency of the seafarers is still providing the workers their wages.</p> <p>The Committee will also conduct an executive session with DFA, DOLE, OWWA, and POEA to discuss confidential matters pertaining to the condition of OFWs in Libya.</p>
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FORUM		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Human Rights	Parliamentarian's Forum on Refugee Awareness and Protection Mechanisms	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2nd District, Zambales), conducted a forum entitled "Parliamentarians' Forum on Refugee Awareness and Protection Mechanisms" at the House of Representatives.</p> <p>The forum was held in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) and the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR).</p> <p>Rep. Deloso-Montalla welcomed the participants to the forum and expressed that the goal of the forum is to raise awareness of the current situation of refugees and asylum seekers in the country as well as in other ASEAN states, and to come up with non-discriminatory policies that will respect the rights of the refugees as human beings.</p> <p>Rep. Glona Labadlabad (2nd District, Zamboanga del Norte) delivered the keynote address in behalf of Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga) during which she underscored the need to come up with a workable protection mechanism for ASEAN refugees.</p> <p>APRRN Interim Secretary General Evan Jones gave a brief overview of the APRRN, which functions as a civil society network that advances the refugee rights in the Asia Pacific Region.</p> <p>Office of the President (OP) Deputy Spokesperson Modesta Chungalao presented the situation of refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons admitted into the Philippines and the policies and programs the government implemented and pursued for their benefit. Chungalao also said that the Philippines is a State Party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 protocol as well as the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.</p> <p>In their presentation of the situation of refugees in Thailand and Malaysia, the APHR and the APRRN spoke of the refugees' limited access to healthcare, jobs, and education as the primary concern that needs to be addressed.</p> <p>An open forum followed after the presentations of the resource persons.</p> <p>In her closing remarks, Rep. Deloso-Montalla thanked the guests and the resource persons for their participation in the event and assured them of the Committee's commitment to help improve refugee protection through appropriate legislation.</p>