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BICAMERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Bicameral Conference Committee	HB 8554 & SB 2059	Rep. Romero and Sen. Pimentel	Enhancing revenue administration and collection by granting an amnesty on all unpaid internal revenue taxes imposed by the national government for taxable year 2017 and prior years with respect to estate tax, other internal revenue taxes, and tax on delinquencies	<p>The Bicameral Conference Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija) and Sen. Sonny Angara, Chairpersons of the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means, respectively, reconciled the disagreeing provisions of HB 8554 and SB 2059.</p> <p>Other conferees present during the bicameral conference committee meeting were the following: On the part of the House, Deputy Speaker Prospero Pichay Jr. (1st District, Surigao del Sur), Minority Leader Danilo Suarez (3rd District, Quezon), Reps. Michael Romero (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), Dakila Carlo Cua (Quirino), Lianda Bolilia (4th District, Batangas), and Arthur Defensor Jr. (3rd District, Iloilo); on the part of the Senate, Senators Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, Franklin Drilon, Juan Miguel "Migz" Zubiri, Ralph Recto, and Maria Lourdes Nancy Sombillo Binay.</p>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agriculture and Food	Substitute Bill to HB 2912	Rep. Amalong	Developing the rubber industry, establishing for the purpose the Philippine Rubber Industry Development Board, defining its powers and functions and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jose Panganiban Jr. (Party-List, ANAC-IP), approved the Substitute Bill to HB 2912. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 3908, 4173, 5519, 6555 & 6954	Deputy Speaker Villarica, former Rep. Aglipay-Villar, Rep. De Venecia, Deputy Speaker Garin, and Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo	Establishing a national program for the malunggay industry, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to the five bills. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.
	HB 7403	Deputy Speaker Escudero	Developing the pili industry, creating for the purpose the Pili Subsidy Fund and the	The Committee approved HB 7403 in consolidation with HB 6717. The Secretariat

Continuation... Agriculture and Food			Pili Research and Development Center, and declaring the Province of Sorsogon as the Pili Capital of the Philippines	was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.
	HB 6717	Rep. Belaro	Promoting the cultivation, production, processing, marketing, and distribution of pili nut	<p>Deputy Speaker Evelina Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon), author of HB 7403, expressed the need to support the pili industry because of its economic potential. Aside from being a source of kernel, pili's by-products include the popular elemi essential oil, shells that are turned into fashion accessories, and carved furniture made from the tree's wood.</p> <p>As the Province of Sorsogon is the largest producer of pili, Deputy Speaker Escudero proposes the creation of a Pili Research and Development Center in the province and declaring it as the "pili capital" of the Philippines.</p> <p>Department of Agriculture (DA) Undersecretary Evelyn Laviña expressed support for the bills.</p> <p>Rep. Wilfredo Caminero (2nd District, Cebu) specifically favors the establishment of a pili research and development center in Sorsogon.</p>
Economic Affairs	Substitute Bill to HBs 8635, 8124, 8189 & 8527	Speaker Macapagal-Arroyo, Deputy Speaker Yap, Reps. Gatchalian, and Salceda	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 230 series of 1987, as amended, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, presided by Rep. Randolph Ting (3 rd District, Cagayan), approved the substitute bill subject to style and amendment.
	HR 2057	Deputy Speaker Yap	Urging the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to revise the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of RA 9856, otherwise known as the Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) Law of 2009, to reflect value-added tax (VAT) exemptions for the initial transfer of property from sponsor to the REIT as contained in RA 10963, or the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Act, and restoring minimum public ownership (MPO) requirements to a minimum of 33% as inscribed in the REIT Law	The Committee adopted HR 2057 with amendments and thereafter approved the corresponding Committee Report.
Human Rights	Substitute Bill to HBs 1617 & 8128	Reps. Zarate and Lagman	Defining the rights and fundamental freedoms of human rights defenders, declaring state responsibilities and instituting effective mechanisms for the protection and promotion of these rights and freedoms	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2nd District, Zambales), approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 1617 and 8128 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Among the amendments agreed upon during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To include a provision holding government personnel administratively, civilly and criminally liable for failing to act with diligence on any complaint or report of violations of human rights and fundamental freedom; To include a provision under Section 18 (Freedom from Intimidation or Reprisal)

Continuation... Human Rights				<p>granting human rights victims the right to establish a sanctuary provided that confidential notice has been given to the Commission on Human Rights (CHR); and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the CHR to lead the formulation of the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the proposed law, together with human rights organizations and representatives from the House Committee on Human Rights and Senate Committee on Justice.
Inter-Parliamentary Relations and Diplomacy	HR 2270	Minority Leader Suarez	Expressing support of the House of Representatives for the withdrawal of the membership of the Philippines from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Eric Singson (2nd District, Ilocos Sur), adopted HR 2270.</p> <p>As stated in HR 2270, the IPU interfered in the country's judicial processes which runs counter to the principle of State sovereignty when it investigated and issued a resolution on the criminal cases filed against Senator Leila de Lima and has issued statements suggesting another intervention on the case of Senator Antonio Trillanes IV.</p> <p>The IPU is a global organization of national parliaments created to safeguard peace and drive positive democratic change through political dialogue and concrete action. (<i>Source: IPU website</i>)</p>
Justice	HB 7123	Rep. Zubiri	Creating one additional branch of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) in the 10 th judicial region to be stationed in the Municipality of Quezon, Province of Bukidnon, further amending for the purpose Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as the Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980, as amended, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Doy Leachon (1st District, Oriental Mindoro), approved HB 7123.</p> <p>Representatives from the Supreme Court (SC), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and Public Attorney's Office (PAO) expressed their support for the bills.</p>
	HBs 2061, 3814 & 7004	Reps. Unabia, Panotes, and Gatchalian	Creating additional branches of the RTC and Metropolitan Trial Court (MeTC) in certain parts of the country, amending for the purpose Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, as amended, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HBs 2061, 3814, and 7004 with the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 2061 - Creation of five instead of one additional RTC in Cagayan de Oro, Province of Misamis Oriental; • HB 3814 - Creation of two additional RTCs each for the Municipalities of Daet and Labo, both located in the province of Camarines Norte, instead of one RTC for each municipality; and • HB 7004 - Creation of one MeTC and one RTC instead of two additional MeTCs in Valenzuela City. <p>The SC, DOJ, and PAO expressed their support for the bills.</p> <p>On the query of the Members regarding the construction of court houses for these additional RTCs and MeTCs, SC Deputy Court Administrator Raul Villanueva said that the SC takes charge of the construction and if the local government unit cannot offer a land for</p>

Continuation... Justice				<p>this purpose, the SC enters into a lease agreement with private entities.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Edcel Lagman (1st District, Albay) proposed a review of the SC's policy concerning the construction of halls of justice and court houses.</p>
	HB 8012	Rep. Lagman	Providing that the seasonable filing of a motion for reconsideration and/or appeal shall stay the execution of the challenged order or decision	<p>The Committee approved HB 8012 subject to style.</p> <p>Rep. Lagman, author of HB 8012, discussed the merits of his bill and informed the Committee that 158 Members have signified to be co-authors of his bill.</p>
	HBs 6653 & 7624	Deputy Speaker Yap and Rep. Rodriguez (M.)	Granting legal residency status to certain aliens in the Philippines under certain conditions	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HBs 6653 and 7624 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Representatives from the DOJ, National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCII), expressed their support for the bills and promised to submit their respective position papers to the Committee.</p>
Overseas Workers Affairs	Substitute Bill to HB 4740	Rep. Gonzales (A. D.)	Providing for the protection of the remittances of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesulito Manalo (Party-List, ANGKLA), approved the substitute bill subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Aurelio "Dong" Gonzales Jr. (3rd District, Pampanga), author of HB 4740, underscored the need to protect the OFW remittances, which significantly contribute to the country's economy, accounting for 10 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017. Gonzales added that in the first nine months alone of 2018, OFW remittances have already reached P2.1 billion.</p> <p>OFW remittances are coursed through intermediaries such as financial and non-bank financial institutions, before reaching their beneficiaries. In the course of the transfer of funds, the amounts remitted are subjected to several fees and high remittance charges which eventually deplete the amount received by the beneficiaries.</p> <p>Thus, the proposed measure seeks to set a limit on the amount of remittance fees to be imposed, grant discounts to OFWs, and grant tax incentives to establishments providing such discounts.</p>
	HBs 8197 & 8414	Deputy Speaker Villarica and Rep. Alejano	Establishing the Office for Social Welfare Attaché, amending for the purpose RA 8042, otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, as amended	<p>The Committee agreed to consolidate the two bills.</p> <p>Rep. Manalo said that the counterpart bill in the Senate (Senate Bill 1819) was approved on Third Reading on October.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Linabelle Ruth Villarica (4th District, Bulacan), author of HB 8197, said that</p>

Continuation... Overseas Workers Affairs				<p>with the growing number of OFWs deployed in various countries, there is also an upsurge in the number of cases on human trafficking, illegal recruitment, and inhumane treatment and abuse experienced by OFWs. Hence, the Deputy Speaker said, the need to institutionalize the deployment of social welfare attachés in selected diplomatic posts to assist OFWs in crisis situations and afford them appropriate social services.</p> <p>Representatives of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) expressed their support for the proposed law.</p> <p>However, Rep. Aniceto “John” Bertiz III (Party-List, ACTS-OFW) expressed strong reservation to the bill, explaining that there are already numerous officers deployed in the country’s overseas posts. He added that the proposed law may add another layer of bureaucracy in the already fragmented structure of government offices servicing the OFWs. He instead suggested the passage of the bill creating the Department of Migration and Development to better protect the welfare of the OFWs.</p>
Public Order and Safety	Privilege Speech 301	Rep. Cerilles	On the alleged injustice committed by the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) Head and Acting Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Catalino Cuy to Governor Antonio Cerilles of Zamboanga del Sur over drug-related issue	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City), will deliberate further on the issues raised in Privilege Speech 301 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Aurora Enerio Cerilles (2nd District, Zamboanga del Sur) claimed that high ranking officials of the NAPOLCOM and the DILG committed a blatant injustice against her husband, Zamboanga del Sur Governor Antonio Cerilles, in connection with the issuance of NAPOLCOM Resolution No. 2017-571 entitled “Withdrawing the Power of Operational Supervision and Control Over the Philippine National Police (PNP) of Governor Antonio Cerilles of Zamboanga del Sur.”</p> <p>Rep. Cerilles stressed that aside from not giving the Governor the opportunity to be heard, NAPOLCOM released its Resolution at the time when news reports about narco-politics in the province were circulating, making it appear that the Governor is involved in the illegal drugs trade. Rep. Cerilles strongly denied the Governor’s involvement in illegal drugs.</p> <p>She also decried NAPOLCOM’s wrong understanding of RA 6975 or the DILG Act of 1990, explaining that under Section 51 of this law, the Governor has no power of operational supervision and control over the PNP units in Zamboanga del Sur as it belongs to the municipal and city mayors.</p> <p>NAPOLCOM Vice Chair Rogelio Casurao explained that the NAPOLCOM Resolution</p>

Continuation... Public Order and Safety				<p>was issued as a result of its investigation of a confidential report from the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) regarding abuse of authority perpetrated by the Governor. He advised Governor Cerilles to obtain information about the confidential report from NICA and submit a counter-evidence to NAPOLCOM so that the latter can forward it to the President who has the power to overturn the NAPOLCOM <i>en banc</i>'s decision.</p> <p>Governor Cerilles informed the Committee that he has exerted efforts to obtain the so-called confidential report from NICA but the latter has not yet furnished him a copy up to now. He also questioned why a case of abuse of authority would be considered confidential when it should be brought in the open and should be filed in the Office of the Ombudsman. He surmised that allegations hurled against him were a result of his strong stance against illegal quarrying involving former politicians.</p> <p>Several Committee Members criticized NAPOLCOM's withdrawal of Governor Cerilles' deputation as the Commission's representative in the province without due process, in violation of Sec. 65 of RA 8551 (PNP Reform and Reorganization Act of 1998).</p> <p>They also objected to the NAPOLCOM's Memorandum Circular 2001-003 which allowed itself to conduct <i>motu proprio</i> investigations of any local executive for the purpose of determining the necessity of suspending or withdrawing his deputation. According to Party-List Reps. Rodante Marcoleta (SAGIP) and Makmod Mending Jr. (AMIN), this violates Sec. 65 of RA 8551 which provides the specific grounds for the suspension or withdrawal of deputation and which grants the President the power to <i>motu proprio</i> restore the deputation upon presentation of good cause.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to conduct an executive meeting at a later date to allow NAPOLCOM to explain the contents of the NICA confidential report as well as identify its source.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Transportation (Technical Working Group)	HB 7915	Rep. Sarmiento (C.)	Promoting national road safety awareness through road safety education, road safety events and activities, and multi-stakeholder consultation and collaboration	The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Renato "Kuya Jojo" Unico Jr. (1 st District, Camarines Norte), directed the Secretariat to come up with a substitute bill, to be submitted to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.

Continuation... Transportation (Technical Working Group)				Rep. Unico requested the stakeholders to submit their respective position papers for consideration by the TWG in its finalization of the substitute bill.
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DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Transportation (Technical Working Group)	Discussion on the status of the Motor Vehicle Inspection System (MVIS) Project of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the implementation of RA 10916, otherwise known as the Road Speed Limiter Act of 2016	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Renato "Kuya Jojo" Unico Jr. (1st District, Camarines Norte), discussed with the transport agencies the status of the MVIS project and the implementation of RA 10916.</p> <p>Land Transportation Office's (LTO) Law Enforcement Service Director Francis Almora said that the DOTr, together with the Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC), is set to bid out the procurement of 26 mobile MVIS which shall be delivered 90 days after the winning bidder receives the Notice to Proceed.</p> <p>The MVIS project, which aims to ensure the roadworthiness of vehicles, is crucial to the implementation of the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP), which seeks to replace old public utility vehicles with safer, more comfortable and more environmentally-friendly alternatives over the next three years.</p> <p>In conjunction with the purchase of new mobile MVIS, Almora said that the LTO is currently rehabilitating both its North and South Motor Vehicle Inspection Centers (MVIC) located in Quezon City and Pasay City, respectively. Moreover, a Department Order is set to be issued by the DOTr on the accreditation of private MVIS companies that will operate MVICs throughout the country, according to DOTr Legislative Liaison Officer Paul Villarosa.</p> <p>Senior Advocacy Officer Jose Mari Salvador of the Legal Engagement Advocating for Development and Reform (LEADER, Inc.) expressed satisfaction that the project is finally moving forward as this would effectively minimize road accidents.</p> <p>The TWG agreed that the accreditation of distributors, installers, and testing centers for speed limiters will be handled by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).</p> <p>Rep. Unico requested the DOTr and the LTO to submit the number of public and private vehicles that will have to undergo testing through the MVIS, and the number of public utility vehicles that are covered by RA 10916.</p>