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BICAMERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Bicameral Conference Committee	HB 8637 & SB 1997	Rep. Silverio and Sen. Gordon	Creating the Regional Investment and Infrastructure Coordinating Hub of Central Luzon and providing funds therefor	<p>The Bicameral Conference Committee, co-presided by Rep. Jesus Nonato Sacdalan (1st District, North Cotabato), Chair of the House Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization, and Senator Richard Gordon, Chair of the Senate Committee on Government Corporations and Public Enterprises, adopted and approved SB 1997, subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>The other conferees present during the bicameral conference committee were: On the part of the House, Reps. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2nd District, Bataan), Mark Go (Baguio City), Geraldine Roman (1st District, Bataan), Orestes Salon (Party-List, AGRI), Lorna Silverio (3rd District, Bulacan), Jose Antonio "Kuya Jonathan" Sy-Alvarado (1st District, Bulacan), and Victor Yap (2nd District, Tarlac); on the part of the Senate, Senators Sonny Angara, Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, Maria Lourdes Nancy Sombillo Binay, and Joel Villanueva.</p>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Basic Education and Culture	HB 58	Rep. Tinio	Institutionalizing support mechanisms for public school teachers and school personnel in matters of student discipline and mechanisms for classroom management and providing for their protection in cases related thereto	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ramon "Red" Durano VI (5 th District, Cebu), approved HB 58 with amendments.
	HB 6211	Rep. Tiangco	Renaming Bangkulasi National High School as the Angeles Memorial High School	The Committee approved HB 6211.
	HB 8273	Rep. Cari	Establishing a junior high school in Barangay Maganhan, City of Baybay, Province of Leyte to be known as Maganhan Junior High School and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 8273.
	HB 5097	Rep. Tupas	Providing for the restoration of mandatory military training for all Grade 11 and 12 students by reinstating Sections 38 and	The Committee will deliberate further on the three bills in its next meeting.

Continuation... Basic Education and Culture			39 of RA 7077, otherwise known as the Armed Forces of the Philippines Reservist Act	Rep. Durano supports the intent of the bills saying that a mandatory ROTC training for students is one of the priority legislative measures of the President.
	HB 5113	Deputy Speaker Abu	Amending RA 7077, mandating the institutionalization, development, training, organization, and administration of basic Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) in Grades 11 and 12 in public and private educational institutions	Representatives from the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of National Defense (DND) expressed support for the bills. While expressing support for the mandatory military training among students, UP Vanguard's National Commander Guido Alfredo Delgado suggested that the ROTC program should be implemented in the tertiary level only, and not in Grades 11 and 12 (senior high school). Delgado said students in these levels are still minors and requiring them to undergo military training will be in violation of the Optional Protocol to the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the Philippines is a state-party. The said protocol ensures that children below the age of 18 do not take part in any armed conflicts or hostilities, Delgado said. The UP Vanguard is a non-stock, non-profit alumni organization composed of graduates of the UP ROTC Advance Courses. DND's Legal Affairs Service Chief Norman Daanoy countered the statement of Delgado arguing that the intent of the bills is not to expose or deploy students to armed conflicts, but to instill in them a strong sense of patriotism and nationalism, and to encourage them to be involved in public and civic affairs. Rep. Ma. Lourdes Aggabao (4 th District, Isabela) suggested that the term "basic military training" should be clearly defined in the bill. Rep. Raul "Boboy" Tupas (5 th District, Iloilo), author of HB 5097, requested the resource persons to submit proposals on how to better protect students from incidents of hazing in the ROTC, which was one of the reasons why this mandatory training program was halted in the past.
	HB 8651	Rep. Violago	Reviving the ROTC in all senior high schools in public and private educational institutions as a mandatory requisite for graduation, repealing for the purpose RA 9163, otherwise known as the National Service Training Program (NSTP) Act of 2001	
Legislative Franchises	HB 5030	Rep. Maceda	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Audiovisual Communicators, Inc. under RA 8124	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Franz "Chicoy" Alvarez (1 st District, Palawan), approved HB 5030 subject to compliance with the Committee's template for bills on legislative franchises in broadcasting.
	HCR 23	Rep. Cua	Approving the transfer, sale, or assignment of the controlling interest of Mindanao Islamic Telephone Company, Inc. (Mislattel)	The Committee, will deliberate further on HCR 23 in its next meeting. Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua, author of HCR 23, said that the measure seeks congressional approval of the transfer of the majority and controlling interest of Mislattel to three corporations: Udenna Corporation, Chelsea Logistics Holdings Corp., and China Telecommunications Corporation. Mislattel, together with the three corporations, was declared and confirmed by the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) as the new major player (NMP) of the Philippine telecommunications (telco) market. One of the requirements to get the NMP status is the increase in shareholdings of Mislattel which the three

Continuation... Legislative Franchises				<p>corporations committed to subscribe, thus resulting in their majority and controlling interest.</p> <p>Rep. Cua underscored the urgency of approving the transfer of the controlling interest of Mislattel so that this third major telco player in the country may already start operating and fulfill its commitment of providing unparalleled quality in telecommunications and internet services.</p> <p>Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) Secretary Eliseo Rio informed the Committee that the selection process for the third telco provider was conducted in the most open and transparent manner. Moreover, Mislattel was the only one qualified as the two other bidders failed to submit the complete requirements, according to NTC Legal Branch Officer-in Charge Ella Blanca Lopez.</p> <p>On the issue of possibly compromising national security given that one of the shareholders of MISLATEL is owned by the Chinese government (China Telecommunications Corporation), National Security Council (NSC) Deputy Director General Vicente Agdamag said that it does not pose a security threat to the country citing a background check conducted by the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA).</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr. (Party-List, AKO BICOL) about the legal dispute between Mislattel and DigiPhil over the alleged exclusive contract between the two firms, Mislattel President Nicanor Escalante claimed that the said contract has long been terminated. (DigiPhil is a subsidiary of TierOne Communications International which is a partner corporation of SEAR Telecom, one of the losing bidders for the third major telco player.)</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Prospero Pichay Jr. (1st District, Surigao del Sur) asserted that the Committee cannot approve yet the transfer of the controlling interest of Mislattel due to the legal issues between the two corporations.</p> <p>On the other hand, Rep. Jose Atienza Jr. (Party-List, BUHAY) recommended otherwise, explaining that it is not within the scope of the Committee to resolve corporate disputes as they are better left to the courts to decide.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to invite DigiPhil in its next meeting to present its side of the issue. In addition, the Committee also requested the NSC to submit the result of the background investigation on Mislattel that was conducted by NICA. Other resource persons were also requested to submit the documents required of them by the Members.</p>
Metro Manila Development	HR 714	Rep. Batocabe	Investigation into the issuance of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) order to close down the Payatas dumpsite	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2 nd District, Quezon City), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 714 in its next meeting.

Continuation... Metro Manila Development				<p>Rep. Castelo questioned why out of the five landfill facilities that were evaluated by the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), only two are actually operating in Metro Manila. He said more landfill sites are needed to avoid a garbage crisis that will pose great risks to the health of Metro Manila residents.</p> <p>These landfill sites are intended to serve as alternative dumpsites considering that the Payatas dumpsite in Quezon City was closed down due to ecological hazards. The closure order was issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) during the term of then Secretary Gina Lopez.</p> <p>Project Development Officer Rene Estipona of the MMDA's Solid Waste Management Office explained that the two landfills currently operating were the ones that met the basic requirement that a landfill should be near the sources of waste.</p>
Public Order and Safety	Privilege Speech 301	Rep. Cerilles	<p>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>	<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) reiterated her request to the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) to provide Governor Cerilles a copy of the confidential report which was submitted to, and subsequently became the basis of, NAPOLCOM in issuing 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>Reps. Abdullah Dimaporo (2nd District, Lanao del Norte) and Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo (1st District, Lanao del Norte) joined Rep. Cerilles' call for transparency, saying that NAPOLCOM has also taken similar actions in their respective districts.</p> <p>NICA Director General Alex Monteagudo explained that following protocol, NICA would need to get the permission of the Office of the President (OP) first before providing confidential information to requesting parties.</p> <p>On the lack of proper procedures in restoring the withdrawn deputation of LCEs, NAPOLCOM Vice Chair Rogelio Casurao and former DILG Secretary and now Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) Chair Catalino Cuy agreed to the Committee's suggestion to review existing procedures on the matter.</p> <p>Likewise, Casurao promised to convey the Committee Members and Governor Cerilles' sentiments to the NAPOLCOM's commission <i>en banc</i>.</p>

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Transportation (Technical Working Group)	HR 2022	Rep. Sarmiento (E.M.)	Inquiry into the status of pre-departure, on-site and other support services provided by government agencies to seafarers	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento (1st District, Samar), discussed the issues raised in HR 2022.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento underscored the significant contribution of Filipino seafarers to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), adding that the seafarers' remittances have reached \$5.87 billion or around P300 billion in 2017. He cited the importance of providing the Filipino seafarers with adequate government support and assistance to ensure that they remain globally competitive and that the international standards of training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers are met.</p> <p>Government agencies which have this mandate are the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Sarmiento, POEA Seafarers Processing Division Chief Augusto San Diego said that a total of 442,820 Filipino seafarers were deployed in 2016 and 449,463 in 2017.</p> <p>Capt. Ronald Enrile of the Philippine Transmarine Carriers, Inc. suggested that to have a more accurate and updated data on the number of seafarers on board ships, all manning agencies should be required to submit every end of the month or quarter the number of seafarers they have deployed and the type of vessel boarded.</p> <p>Capt. Diofonce Tuñacao of the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP) suggested that the MARINA should accept the training ships donated by other countries and should have ample budget to finance the operations and maintenance of these ships, which is around P94 million annually.</p> <p>The stakeholders were asked to submit their respective positions papers on the subject of the resolution.</p>
Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)	HBs 8523 & 8558	Reps. Suansing (H.) and Nieto	Imposing excise tax on plastic bags used in supermarkets, malls, shops, stores, sales outlets, and other similar establishments	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Rep. Lianda Bolilia (4th District, Batangas), Committee Vice Chair, agreed to come up with a substitute bill incorporating therein pertinent recommendations from the resource persons. Afterwhich, the substitute bill will be reported out to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p>

Continuation... Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)				<p>HBs 8523 and 8558, authored by Reps. Horacio Suansing Jr. (2nd District, Sultan Kudarat) and John Marvin "Yul Servo" Nieto (3rd District, Manila), respectively, seek to impose a P10.00 tax on each plastic bag used in supermarkets, malls, shops, stores, sales outlets, and other similar establishments to be charged against the customers.</p> <p>Rep. Bolilia emphasized that the purpose of the proposed measure is to regulate the use of plastic bags and instill in people's minds the adverse effect on the environment from the improper disposal of plastic bags.</p> <p>Rep. Manuel Zubiri (3rd District, Bukidnon) pointed out that 80% of plastic wastes that pollute the soil, waterways and shorelines in the urban areas are the non-reusable or single-use plastic bags, while only 20% consist of plastic used as original packaging for goods or products. Hence, he said, it is the larger 80% that need to be immediately addressed which, rightfully, is being covered by the proposed law.</p>
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DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Metro Manila Development	<p>Discussion with concerned government agencies and stakeholders on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the planned phase-out of trucks and buses which are over 15 years old 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), discussed the actions taken or developments concerning the planned phase-out of over 15-year old trucks and the delayed return of emptied containers to shipyards by some trucking companies.</p> <p>Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) Board member Ronaldo Corpuz reported that the Department of Transportation's (DOTr) mandatory 15-year age limit policy for public utility buses (PUBs) and trucks for hire (TFH) still remains. As such, the LTFRB will no longer issue new franchises for PUBs and TFHs that are over 15 years old reckoned from the date of manufacture. However, for those that have been issued franchises prior to reaching 15 years of age can continue operating until 2020.</p> <p>Alliance of Philippine Brokers and Truckers Associations legal counsel Ferdinand Mañebo argued that the standard used by DOTr in issuing such policy is unreasonable and arbitrary. He explained that there is no direct relation between the truck's roadworthiness and age, claiming that some trucks may be below 15 years of age but may no longer be roadworthy.</p> <p>Several Committee Members suggested that a comprehensive study should be conducted first before implementing this DOTR policy. They added that the DOTr should allow trucks to continue their operations as long as they are roadworthy, regardless of age.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to write the DOTr to convey its recommendation to suspend the implementation of the policy on the mandatory age limit for trucks and buses.</p>

<p>Continuation... Metro Manila Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the delayed return of emptied containers 	<p>Truckers are complaining about the congestion of the Manila ports mainly due to the huge volume of empty containers stored within or lying around the port premises. The problem causes a domino effect including the truckers' failure to return emptied containers to the shipping lines within the agreed timeframe and slow turn-around of trucks depriving them of their income.</p> <p>Aduana Business Club Inc. (ABCI) President Mary Zapata suggested that empty containers that are not yet scheduled for re-export should be placed in container yards outside the ports to prevent congestion. International shipping lines should also waive the detention charges they impose on truckers due to delayed return of empty containers if the reason for the delay is on account of lack of space in their container yards. Truckers complain that it takes some time for shipping lines to accept empty containers being returned because their container yards no longer have available space at some point.</p> <p>Rep. Rodel Batocabe (Party-List, AKO BICOL) stressed that the imposition of charges and fees by shipping companies should be regulated by the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA).</p> <p>However, PPA's Port Operations Services Department Manager Rey del Moro clarified that the collection of shipping fees and charges from truckers is outside the jurisdiction of the PPA.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Professional Customs Brokers Association of the Philippines Inc. (PCBAPI) President Reynaldo Soliman said that the government should strictly implement Customs Administrative Order (CAO) No. 01-2015, which provides, among others, that emptied containers shall be re-exported to the country of origin within 90 days from the date of last discharge. He added that the government should not allow ports to be used as storage area for the empty containers, except for their repositioning or re-exportation, but which requires a permit to load from the Bureau of Customs (BOC).</p> <p>Association of International Shipping Lines, Inc. (AISL) President Patrick Ronas said that the empty containers could not be shipped out or re-exported back to the country of origin easily and on time because the vessels that would carry these containers could not just get near the port due to weather disturbances and other reasons outside of their control.</p> <p>The Committee directed the shipping lines and the trucking companies to discuss among themselves the issues raised. Both Reps. Batocabe and Manuel Luis Lopez (1st District, Manila) were requested to facilitate the mediation meetings between the two parties.</p>
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